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## EXAMPLES OF BOLSHEVIST WORK AND REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE

WE are witnessing the end of the stabilisation of capitalism, a transition to a new series of revolutions and wars. The proletariat of the U.S.S.R., under the leadership of the C.P.S.U. (b), and its leader, Comrade Stalin, in intense struggle with the open class enemy and opportunist sceptics, by the hands of millions of shock-brigaders are emancipating labour and transforming it into a matter of honour, of fame, of heroism, and victoriously completing the construction of socialism by the completion of the *First Five-Year Plan in Four Years*.

The proletariat of the capitalist countries and its Communist vanguard are preparing, through partial economic and political struggles, for the decisive struggles for power.

Have we conditions in the capitalist countries to-day to ensure that the Communist Parties may, in the shortest historical period, obtain that Bolshevik hardening, that Bolshevik flexibility and approach to the masses, which is necessary to the decisive struggles? Have we facts showing that the C.P.S. are acquiring these qualities to-day in various fields of class struggle?

Lenin, in speaking of the historical conditions of the success of the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution, pointed out the following two fundamental conditions:

"On the one hand, Bolshevism came into being in 1903 on the very firm foundation of Marxian theory... On the other hand... Bolshevism went through fifteen years (1903-1917) of practical history, which, in fertility of experience, had no equal anywhere else in the world. In no other country, during those fifteen years, was there anything approximating to such wide revolutionary experience, such a variety and rapidity of shifting forms in the movement, legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, open and underground, embracing small circles and large masses, parliamentary and terrorist."—"Left-Wing Communism," p. 12.

But the wealth and diversity of the forms of the movement are according to Lenin, not only a peculiarity of the Russian pre-October epoch. It is characteristic of every period of revolutionary revival when enormous masses come into motion. Lenin said:

"History in general, the history of revolutions in particular, has always been richer, more varied and variform, more vital and 'cunning' than is conceived of by the best parties... This is natural... the revolution is effected at the moment of the exceptional uplift and exertion of *all* the human faculties—consciousness, will, passion, phantasy—of tens of millions, spurred on by the bitterest class-war.

"From this, there follow two very important practical conclusions: First, the revolutionary class, for the realisation of its object, must be able to master *all* forms or aspects of social activity without the slightest exception... secondly, that the revolutionary classes must be ready for the most rapid and unexpected substitution of one form by another....

"If we do not possess all the means of struggle, we may suffer a heavy—at times, even a decisive—defeat if the changes in the situation of other classes which are beyond our control should make the order of the day that form of activity in which we are specially weak."—"Left-Wing Communism," p. 75.

If we approach with this gauge the present level of the international revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the present level of the work of the Communist Parties, we will be able to note that the ground of the capitalist world is so hot that the sweep of the movement has already assumed such dimensions that the forms of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat have become so diversified, that they changed so rapidly from place to place, from one moment to another, that the Communist Parties which are connected with the masses, despite all their unquestionable backwardness, are now speedily going through fighting preparation in the experience of the struggle. For this reason the work of the Communist Parties already reveals a good many samples of such an approach to the masses, such heroism, such revolutionary flexibility which only the Bolsheviks possessed on the threshold of October and which deserve to be broadly popularised.

Of course, the revolutionary process is developing unevenly. For this reason the revolutionary struggle rises to a higher stage, its forms become more variegated and richer in content, and the fighting preparation of the Communist Parties proceeds more rapidly in those countries where the revolutionary process has advanced further. This applies to China, where a victorious revolution, under the banner of the Soviets, is already developing in one part of its territory, while in another the bitter struggle against the internal Kuomintang counter-revolution is combined with the defence of the great masses against the military offensive of Japanese imperialism; Japan, where the war upon China is combined with the gravest crisis in the rear of the army, within the country; Spain which is going through a revolution; Poland and Germany, which have closely approached a revolutionary crisis. But with all of its unevenness the revolutionary upsurge, on the background of the bitterest world economic crisis, is now growing in every capitalist and colonial country. Accordingly,



there is at present no country in which the Communist Party and the mass of workers are not speedily going through the school of revolution, in which it could not display examples of true Bolshevik struggle.

In China and Japan we now have many striking examples of a combination of *good illegal work with an open mass struggle and good anti-imperialist struggle under conditions of war, under conditions of brutal terror requiring from these parties true heroism and the greatest flexibility.*

Lenin wrote: "For the revolution it is essential first that a majority of the workers (or at least the majority of the conscious, thinking, politically active workers) should fully understand the necessity for a revolution and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it." "Left-Wing Communism," p. 66.

Our heroic Japanese and Chinese Communist Parties and revolutionary workers have demonstrated that they have understood this rule and are carrying it into effect. Let us cite several examples of their revolutionary struggle.

In China during the Japanese attack upon Shanghai a textile workers' strike was organised at the beginning of February, 1932, in all the Japanese mills, under the leadership of the Communist Party, with the demand for higher wages and the evacuation of the Japanese forces. The strike affected 40,000 workers and lasted four months, including two-and-a-half months after the cessation of hostilities. The strike was conducted under the threat of Japanese and Kuomintang bayonets and under conditions of the cruellest starvation. Despite all this, there was no case of strike-breaking on the part of the unemployed.

Several Chinese chauffeurs who were forced by the Japanese during the fighting, to transport Japanese soldiers and ammunition, drove their machines into the Yangtse River, causing the soldiers to be drowned together with the ammunition, and losing their own lives.

Chinese telephone operators in British concessions, and in the international settlement in Shanghai during the Japanese offensive refused to work, under penalty of death, for the Japanese military forces. Some of them were shot yet the others remained away from work.

During the same advance upon Shanghai, when the Communist cells broke up as a result of the hostilities, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party sent instructors to Shanghai who restored the cells in the factories. These cells carried on work among the soldiers of the 19th Army as a result of which soldier committees were formed in the army. If the 19th Army put up a stiff resistance to the Japanese onslaught it was due, in no small measure, to the work of the Communists.

In August-September, 1932, a strike (the fifth in

the course of one year) was organised, under the leadership of the Communist Party and Red trade unions, in the Tian-Shan coalmines near Peiping, 20,000 workers taking part in it. This strike was directed against the compulsory collection of membership dues to the yellow (Kuomintang) union and demanded a rise in wages. The strike was accompanied by bloody clashes with the police and Kuomintang troops. The strikers beat to death the leader of the Yellow trade union, secured the release of the arrested labour delegates, and gained an increase in wages.

In Japan the Communist Party publishes an illegal central organ entitled "Sekki" ("Red Banner"). This organ is being regularly confiscated by the police. In March the office of "Sekki" was smashed up and two issues were confiscated. In April three printers were arrested and the police found a trace of the illegal printing shop. In October the distributing machinery of the journal was broken up. Nevertheless the central organ of the Japanese Communist Party regularly appears two or three times each month in an edition of tens of thousands.

The Communist Party of Japan has been carrying on with the greatest courage an open anti-war campaign with defeatist slogans ever since the beginning of the war. On the anti-war day of August 1, 1932, the Communists and the revolutionary workers brought out on the streets of Tokio several thousand workers despite the fact that thousands of policemen had been mobilised and patrolled the city with machine-guns. In Tokio, in the Koto labour quarters, on Mikawadima street, a demonstration of 2,000 people took place while another demonstration involving a thousand persons marched through Tendibayen. For the first time in the history of Japan a demonstration of 350 persons broke through the centre of the city and marched along Ginza street. Communists and revolutionary workers in groups of thirty to forty, held street meetings near the factory gates demanding the cessation of the war. The working-class population supported the demonstrators by shouting revolutionary slogans.

On July 26, 1932, 2,000 people demonstrated in the district of Koto against a sentence passed upon Communists. In the Sildzoku district 300 young men marched with red banners and were arrested, but the workers snatched the banners from the arrested and continued to demonstrate with their banners in front of the police.

During the attack upon Shanghai a soldiers' revolutionary committee in Shanghai issued anti-war appeals and leaflets were thrown from a military airplane on the front. The Communist propaganda found its reverberation in the army. Thus 200 Japanese soldiers were shot in Manchuria for



refusing to fight against their Chinese brethren (in Fushung).

Strikes under war conditions and police terrorism assume a revolutionary form in Japan. In March, 1932, the subway workers held a strike demanding that wages should be paid to the mobilised workers throughout the period of mobilisation, as well as higher pay for the women, etc. The strike had been prepared in secret. The strikers accumulated a month's supply of food and on the eve of a holiday, when the traffic is especially heavy, they descended into the tunnel, barricaded the entrance with four cars, built barbed wire entanglements around the tunnel and sent an electric current through it, and posted pickets at the entrance which were known as "death detachments." The police, in order to demoralise the strikers, drove their families to the place of the strike, but the relatives instead of asking the strikers to go back to work, urged them to fight on stoically. The strike ended in victory.

The Communist Party of Japan developed considerable activity also in the village. In the prefecture of Okayama several hundred peasants attacked the police station twelve times and released the revolutionary leaders imprisoned there. In the prefecture Totory, 350 persons, including women and children, attacked the police station demanding the release of the imprisoned revolutionary leaders. In this prefecture ten Communist leaders last month captured the leadership of the peasant association and started a peasant revolt. They encouraged the peasants to seize the property of the landlords and deal with the officials serving the landlords. On October 16 about 500 peasants held a demonstration in front of the police station of Yonage and on October 27 they attacked the police posts in the prefecture.

While displaying such heroism in the struggle the Japanese Communists, like true Bolsheviks, have succeeded in putting an end to their old sectarian sentiments and have displayed the greatest flexibility in the mobilisation of the peasant masses for the struggle. Thus they participated in the mass petition campaign among the peasants organised by the fascists capturing the leadership of the movement from the latter.

In Spain, owing to the revolutionary situation, mass actions led by the Party immediately assume acute revolutionary forms; in July, 1931, the Communist Party in Seville organised several economic strikes. During these strikes the police killed a certain popular worker. The Communist Party called a meeting in this connection and decided to organise a protest strike. The anarchist workers joined the strike. The funeral of the murdered worker took place on the first day of the strike. The police attacked the demonstrators who put up armed

resistance. In response to the police terrorism a *partisan struggle* began. Separate groups of partisans attacked the police with arms in their hands and quickly took cover. This guerilla warfare continued for a full week, the authorities resorting to aviation and artillery and demolishing the house in which the Communists met.

In the village of Vilisd Don-Fadrike, in the province of Toledo, the Communists carried out much organisational work as a result of which a Communist was elected mayor of the village by an absolute majority. The Communists upon capturing control of the village administration, organised young Communist, pioneer and women's organisations. During the whole of 1931 they conducted strikes which were accompanied by bloody clashes with the police and secured a very notable improvement of the condition of the farm labourers. The movement reached its apex in June, 1932. The authorities provoked the Communists to an armed conflict. The Communists disarmed the police. This led to the despatch of a detachment of gendarmerie to the village which resisted their invasion. A battle occurred following which the Communists succeeded in retreating without losses and taking refuge in the mountains.

A great swing of the mass movement under the leadership of the Communist Parties, is to be observed in the most important section of the world revolutionary front (excluding U.S.S.R.), in *Central Europe, in Poland, Germany and Czecho-Slovakia*. In these countries, too, it is possible to point out many examples of a truly Bolshevik leadership of the mass movement, and the revolutionary struggle of the mass.

In Germany the strike of the Berlin street car workers served as an example of the speedy mobilisation of the masses for the struggle which made it impossible for the social-fascists to disrupt the strike at the very beginning. On the initiative of the Communists a strike referendum was held among the tramwaymen. During this referendum 70 per cent. of the 20,000 workers voted in favour of a strike. Nevertheless, the strike was in danger of being broken up from the very beginning. The old German union of tramwaymen is controlled by the reformists, and the meeting of functionaries of the union where the result of the referendum was announced, decided almost unanimously, by 896 to three votes, not to declare a strike under the pretext that the supporters of the strike failed to secure three-quarters of the vote. Foreseeing the possibility of the disruption of the strike, the Communists took quick action. Simultaneously with the meeting of the reformist functionaries, the revolutionary trade union opposition called a delegate meeting which was attended by 1,000 delegates of the



Berlin tramwaymen. This meeting took a stand in favour of a strike. The decision was adopted at 11 p.m. The entire Party organisation of Berlin was immediately mobilised and by 4 a.m. all the tramwaymen were notified of the decision of the delegates' meeting and strike pickets were posted at all the tramway depots of Berlin, unemployed workers taking part in them. This supplied a worthy answer to the "Vorwaerts" which wrote: "The distance between a resolution in favour of a strike and the actual conduct of the strike is still very great." Owing to the great political importance of the tramway strike in the capital there were reasons to expect the violent interference of authorities and the arrest of the strike committee. This, too, had been anticipated by the Communist Party: the central strike committee and its local branches were illegal and met secretly.

Many instances of speedy mobilisation of the masses for the struggle were shown by the German Communist Party during the defence against the fascist offensive. The German Communist Party rejected Neumann's slogan: "Beat every fascist wherever you meet him," which provoked the Communists to acts of individual terror. In opposition to this petty bourgeois "leftist" slogan, the Party on the one hand developed a mass agitation against the fascists, individual members of the Party penetrating the fascist meetings and exposing the fascist leaders before the masses humbugged by these leaders, at the risk of being beaten and maimed; on the other hand, the Party organised mass physical resistance to the fascists in the attempts of the storm detachments to break into the labour quarters.

Examples of such mass resistance are provided by the cases of Wuppertal and Kesslingerstrasse. The repeated attempts of large groups of the storm detachments to penetrate the labour quarters of Wuppertal in order to demonstrate there met with stubborn resistance on the part of the workers. As soon as the Nazis announced their intention to hold a demonstration, the workers met and organised barriers against the police automobiles. Whenever the fascists attempted suddenly to break into the workers' streets with the support of the police, men and women workers hurled upon the fascist bandits everything they could lay hold on. A regular battle occurred in the street with barricades being built and a number of people being killed and wounded. Similar events took place also in the attempt of the Nazis to demonstrate on Kesslingerstrasse. When they appeared on this street under the protection of a very strong police guard, flower pots were thrown upon their heads from the windows and the workers immediately rushed into the street and drove the fascists out, together with the police.

In Poland, a striking, though by no means isolated,

*example of the transformation of an economic strike, under the leadership of the Communist Party, into a revolutionary political strike accompanied by the seizure of the factories*, is provided by the strike at the Krusze & Ender textile mill in Pabianitzky. In response to the lay-off of 1,200 men, a meeting of 3,000 workers decided to declare a strike and remain in the factory. A strike committee was elected, consisting of both revolutionary workers, socialists and non-party workers. The factory was occupied by 1,500 workers, the others going to the other factories and workers' houses to secure support of the strikers. The social-fascist deputy Sherkovoschi, who, at first attempted to display his "independence" by refusing to participate in the negotiations, together with the fascist trade union organisation, later arrived at a meeting of 5,000 textile workers of the Kindler factory, and announced the readiness of the P.S.P. to support the strike under the condition that the strikers agree to withdraw from the Krusze & Ender factory, thus abandoning the occupation of the factory. The great crowd responded to this by shouting: "Down with the police agents, down with the traitor." After he had left the hall the local social-fascist Rashplia came out with another more conciliatory resolution, to strike under the leadership of the P.S.P. ("class") union. At first the workers took this bait. But when Rashplia moved to close the meeting our comrades advanced the slogan of organising a demonstration and marching to the Krusze & Ender factory. Six thousand men marched to the factory, and from both sides of the mill there began to be heard shouts against the fascist Government, *against the manufacturers, against war, and for a worker-peasant Government*. The police resorted to tear gases. The struggle spread to the whole city. The workers smashed up a restaurant in which the local bourgeoisie met. Reinforcements of mounted and foot police arrived from Lodz, and attempted to break into the factory, but were beaten back by the workers who used fire-hoses against them. The second attack was repulsed with the aid of hydrochloric acid from the dyeing department. The struggle lasted until 3 a.m., sixty workers being injured and beaten and 200 arrested. Finally the factory was recaptured. However, already on Friday demonstrations began, and on Saturday a protest strike broke out in the Kindler mill. On Monday seven other mills rose up. At a meeting addressed by the Communist Member of Parliament, there were 3,000 people in attendance. The strike at the Krusze & Ender mill continued.

Particularly successful cases of the development of the strike movement with the aid of the extensive application of the policy of the united front from below have been recorded by the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia. We shall not deal here with the



case of the Brux general strike of the miners of 1932, which has already been described at length in the pages of our magazine,\* and in which Czech National, German Fascist, Czech and German Social-Democratic, Christian and non-party workers fought hand-in-hand with the Communists, and captured the right to the streets in an open battle with the police, gendarmerie and dragoons during which barricades were built. This strike ended in success and tremendously strengthened the prestige of the Communist Party. Here we shall deal with another, earlier and less famous case, the case of the masons' strike, which affected the entire Freiwaldau district, and was led by the Communist Party. The violent character of this strike which was against wage-cuts, forced the employers to surrender. The masses, armed with picks, and hammers, demonstrated before the villas of the manufacturers and the district police and Government buildings. When the strike was won the Government made an attempt to deprive the members of the Red trade unions of the right to unemployment benefits. To this attempt the masons of the whole district, in response to an appeal of the Communist Party, and of the revolutionary trade union opposition, downed tools and organised a protest demonstration. The demonstration was prohibited. The gendarmerie was mobilised to the place of the expected demonstration, yet on November 24, 1931, the demonstration was held. Bloody clashes occurred resulting in the murder of seven workers and severe injuries to eighteen. However, the gendarmerie was put to flight. In response to these murders the workers of the whole district, acting on a call of the Communist Party, organised a general strike which lasted for three days, until the day of the funeral of the victims. No gendarme dared appear on the street during this period. Work in 150 factories was suspended as a mark of protest. The Czech workers protested against the ruthlessness of the Czech gendarmes who attacked the German workers. Hundreds of factory committees, even those controlled by the reformists, joined in the protest. Municipal representatives, intellectuals and thousands of meetings passed resolutions of protest.

The strike of the railwaymen of Cherveno Shkalo against low wages also bore a bloody character.

It is necessary to note also certain cases of revolutionary actions of the unemployed under the direct leadership of the Communists or under the influence of Communist agitation.

In the United States a demonstration of 30,000 unemployed workers who had been dismissed from the Ford works in Detroit held a demonstration in March, 1932, under the leadership of Communists. The unemployed demonstrators marched to the factory and collided with the police, who barred their

way. A battle occurred. Originally the crowd retreated. Two young Communists (a boy and a girl) then displayed special heroism, taking up the leadership of the crowd which followed them and broke through the police cordon. In this clash three workers were killed and many were wounded on both sides.

In October, 1932, the C.P. of the United States organised in Chicago a united front conference of the unemployed. On October 31 an unemployed demonstration was organised in the same city with the participation of 30,000 people. As a result of this demonstration the 50 per cent. reduction of the unemployment allowance affecting 150,000 jobless workers was cancelled.

The C.P.G.B., which is only just commencing to transform its general work, has already achieved considerable success in leading the unemployed movement.

In Northern Ireland (the British section of Ireland) the unemployed of Belfast marched in November to the municipal hall, demanding increased unemployment benefits. They were stopped by the police, who barred their way. The police were finally driven back. A military unit was then called out. A clash occurred with the soldiers, the unemployed erecting barricades. Comrade Tom Mann, the treasurer of the Unemployed Workers' Movement, who arrived from London at this time, was arrested (See No. 1, "C.I.," 1933).

At the end of Dec., 1932, there was a mass demonstration of unemployed in Glasgow, Scotland, where the unemployed movement is controlled by the Communist Party. The demonstration culminated in a battle with the police. In the march to the municipal hall 5,000 unemployed participated headed by a detachment of war veterans 600 strong. By the time the demonstrators arrived at the municipal hall their number grew to 15,000. The demonstrators sang the "Red Flag" and shouted "We demand a winter allowance." Armed with sticks, stones, clubs the unemployed began to pursue the detectives who penetrated into the crowd, crying: "Throw the spies into the river." A battle occurred with the mounted police, in which fourteen policemen were wounded. The unemployed of Edinburgh, Fifeshire, Buckfield and Portsmouth secured winter allowances in consequence of their actions.

The movement of the revolutionary youth, owing to the weakness of the Y.C.L. organisations, lags considerably behind the revolutionary movement of the adult workers and as a result a tremendous percentage of the young workers in the different countries are still embraced by bourgeois organisations. However, the facts have shown that here too it is not difficult to cause a breach provided the Y.C.L. rids itself of the sectarian methods and actually turns

\* No. 11/12 "C.I."



to the masses. In confirmation of the above, we may refer to the exemplary work of the Y.C.L. of Poland during the organisation of the strike of the Widzevskaia Manufaktura in Lodz. In response to a 25 per cent. wage-cut, a strike broke out in two spinning mills on August 26. A number of representatives of the youth were elected to the strike committee. The Y.C.L. took up the struggle to stop work in the other departments as well. A strike committee of nine young workers was elected in the weaving shed. The committee went to the director demanding for the young workers five zlotys per day, the liquidation of piece-work, the abolition of the regulation forcing the workers to buy goods in the factory store, etc. The passivity of the adults was broken. In reply to these demands the administration threatened to discharge the young workers. The representatives of the youth did not allow themselves to be intimidated. On Monday the young workers quit work while the older workers continued. The strike committee was enlarged to the number of eighteen. The strike among the youth extended, yet the grown-up workers still continued work. The young workers were not dismayed and began to carry on agitation among the adult workers. The agitation was successful and in response to an appeal of the Y.C.L., all the spinning shops stopped work. Gradually the whole factory was brought within the strike. The workers decided to occupy the factory. The administration then took advantage of the absence of the workers from the shops to lock the doors. The 2,000 workers decided to spend the night in the factory yard. On the following day the workers organised a supply committee and a commune. The police confiscated the food, however, yet the vast majority of the strikers remained undaunted. Under the leadership of the Polish Communist Party and of the Y.C.L., they remained in the factory yard despite hunger, cold and rain. Those who agitated for calling off the strike were driven out by the workers. The Lodz Y.C.L. raised a solidarity campaign among the youth employed in the textile mills. Mass meetings and demonstrations were held in the factories. On Monday about 2,000 workers arrived at the Widzevskaia Manufaktura. They left the mill only on Saturday, September 3. The strike was continued, however, and the administration was forced to make concessions.

In the modern strike movement it is possible to note many instances of heroic conduct on the part of women workers who have shown how important it is for the Communist Parties to strengthen tenfold the work among them under the conditions of the growing revolutionary upsurge. We shall point out several examples of heroic conduct of working women. During the strike in Charleroi, Belgium, a young working girl, nineteen years old, by the name of

Madeleine de Voulf, participated for two days and two nights, on July 14 and 15, in the labour demonstrations in Charleroi and Marchienne. She carried the red banner and marched at the head of the demonstration which, upon starting out of Marchienne broke through the police cordon posted by the Charleroi police. She also led the demonstration in Marchienne which built barricades and burnt down the Copen Palace. She bravely fought the gendarmerie. During the general strike in the central district on July 13, and 14, women stopped the tramway traffic by lying down upon the rails in front of the cars. The women did the same thing in Iben St. Pierre, La Louviers and Brakini.

The women workers in Germany have shown great steadfastness and courage in the struggles with the fascist bands. An example: In Dessau the fascists prepared a descent on the working-class quarter. They arrived in lorries, accompanied by the police. The working-class population patrolled the streets for a whole day. The working women occupied the first ranks. The next day they demanded of the police that the fascists should not be allowed in the working-class quarters. The police, nevertheless, did nothing, and workers came from every house and spent the whole day and night in the streets to prevent the entrance of the fascists. The women demanded that the police search the motor-cars for arms and confiscate them. The police refused to search and contented themselves with questioning the leaders whether any arms were being carried. The latter denied this, nevertheless a shot was fired from an automobile, wounding a ten-year-old boy in the leg. The crowd was seized by frenzied rage, demanding that the police, who allowed such an outrage, be chased away. The police attempted to arrest a few workers and Communists but the men and women workers snatched them from the police. The women joined hands, forming a chain and cordoning off the street shouting: "Stop!" The fascist automobiles advanced. The fascists, refusing to stop, prepared to run the women down. Only then did the police intervene, and the fascist cars were compelled to turn about and take another route.

In the cases of Madeleine de Voulf and the young people who headed the demonstration in Detroit and carried the masses against the police cordon, we see the mass struggle itself breeds heroes.

We have referred to examples of mass work. We shall now note two cases of revolutionary parliamentarism showing that our members of Parliament, contrary to the social-democrats, are not only able to appeal to the masses from the parliamentary platform, but also come down into the very midst of the mass movement. Lenin in 1915 wrote in connection with the report of the illegal work of the Bolshevik



member of the Duma, Muranov, and the notes of the Bolshevik Duma member Petrovsky, published at the trial of the Bolshevik members of the Duma :

"In Russia there proved to be one Workers' Party whose deputies shone, not by the gift of the gab, not by their admittance to the bourgeois intellectual salons, not by the businesslike dexterity of the 'European' lawyer and Member of Parliament, but by their connections with the working masses, by self-sacrificing work among these masses, by the performance of the modest invisible, hard, thankless and specially dangerous functions of the illegal propagandist and organiser. To rise higher, to the title of a deputy or cabinet minister influential in 'society,' such was the real sense of the 'European' (read 'Lackey') 'Socialist' parliamentarism. To descend below, to help enlighten and unite the exploited and oppressed, such was the slogan advanced by the examples of Muranov and Petrovsky. And this slogan will gain world historical significance."

This "slogan of world historical significance" is beginning more and more frequently to be applied by our Communist deputies. We shall cite here two cases :

On the day of the opening of the Parliament in Denmark, November 29, 1932, a great demonstration was held before Parliament in Copenhagen. In the last elections to Parliament the Communist Party of Denmark secured two seats for the first time. And the first step of these deputies was not to make speeches in Parliament, but to take part in the workers' demonstration against the bourgeois Parliament. In the demonstration participated 5,000 workers, and the Communist deputies addressed the masses both at the beginning and at the end of the demonstration arousing tremendous enthusiasm among them.

Another example of revolutionary parliamentarism was shown by the Communist Party of Greece. In the last parliamentary elections held in the autumn of this year the young Communist Party of Greece won a great victory, polling 50,000 votes while the social-democrats failed even to put up tickets of their own, but blocked with the bourgeois party instead. The newly-elected Communist deputies immediately demonstrated their close connection with the masses. During the tramwaymen's strike in Athens the deputies always remained with the strikers, leading their demonstrations, attending their meetings, etc. When the strike entered the decisive phase and the Government began to employ force to restore the traffic, the deputies, at the head of a demonstration, went to the tramway line and lay down on the rails to interfere with the movement of cars. Many strikers were arrested, including the Communist deputies. But this victory over the strikers will only strengthen

the indignation of the workers, the revolutionary activity of the Greek proletariat and its interest in Communism, in no small degree thanks to the courageous behaviour of the Communist deputies.

In conclusion, several examples of good Bolshevik work in the army. Until recently the French Communist Party was noted for its excellent work in the army, although recently it has unfortunately weakened this work. The seeds sown by it, in the army produced a rich harvest. We shall note one example : the revolt of the seamen of the disciplinary battalion in Calvy on the Island of Corsica. The rebellious seamen were tried on February 26-28, 1932. The seamen among whom agitation had been carried on for three months, revolted about the punishment of one of them, barricaded themselves up in their rooms and fought against the guards. The entire gendarmerie and a battalion of infantry were mobilised against them. At the trial *they demanded a Communist attorney declaring that they trust no one but a Communist*. In the dock sat five leaders of the revolt and nineteen witnesses were called. The seamen, instead of defending themselves, acted as prosecutors. All the witnesses with the exception of one behaved in a similar fashion. The trial aroused a strong response in the navy and the defendants had to be acquitted.

Another example of efficient work in the army was given by the Communist Party of Switzerland. We have already recorded in our journal the bloody street demonstration in Geneva, and the general strikes in Geneva and Lausanne, which followed it. As a result of the Geneva events one hundred workers in soldiers' uniforms were thrown into prison. The indignation over the Geneva blood bath and the arrest of the soldiers spread among the great working masses, especially among the workers on military service. In December a meeting of 500 soldiers was held in Zurich by the Initiative Committee of the 27th infantry regiment. At this meeting which expressed a vigorous protest against the massacre, was elected a committee of defence of the arrested soldiers. The committee issued an appeal to all the soldiers and to the whole of the working population. Even before this meeting was held the social-democratic leaders in Switzerland began a dirty campaign against the arrested soldiers, supplying the police with materials for the prosecution of the participants of the movement. The police pulled every string in order to implicate the Defence Committee and liquidate it. Nevertheless, the committee continued its work. On December 6 it called a mass meeting in Zurich, which was attended by thousands of workers and at which a Geneva soldier described the events in Geneva, showing who was responsible for the slaughter. A similar meeting was organised on December 14 in Basle, this meeting joining in the



protest of the Zurich soldiers and also electing a defence committee. Fifteen worker army reservists expressed a desire to work in this committee. This entire movement which has been sponsored by the Communists, fights under the slogans "For the release of all the arrested soldiers, for the cancellation of all the sentences passed by the military tribunal," "For the arrest of Colonel Lederrey, who issued the order to fire and for the arrest of the Geneva Government which is responsible for the bloody massacre." Under these slogans the worker-soldiers and the labour population of Switzerland are organising the defence of their class comrades incarcerated in the Geneva jail.

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We have cited various instances of good Bolshevik revolutionary work and of Bolshevik revolutionary struggles. We could cite a good many other examples of this kind. They are symptomatic of the present period, of the period of transition through a new series of revolutions and wars. They confirm Lenin's thesis that the revolutionary upsurge and the entry upon the arena of the struggle of the greatest masses breeds a wealth and diversity of forms of the movement. This does not in the least remove the question of the backwardness of our Parties compared with the enormous revolutionary possibilities, a backwardness which remains an unquestionable fact. This does not in the least remove the task of tireless self-criticism. On the contrary, the greater the swing of the movement the greater the demands it makes on the Communist Parties. But if self-

criticism is necessary in order that our Parties might learn by their mistakes and correct them, it is no less necessary to acquaint our entire body of Communist activists with our achievements, with the examples of truly Bolshevik revolutionary work clearly demonstrating how it is possible under the present conditions to surmount the difficulties of the struggle, inflict blows at the class enemy, undermine the influence of the social-fascist class agency of the bourgeoisie, broaden the revolutionary front, bring up the reserves to the revolutionary vanguard, cause demoralisation in the army, steel ourselves in the battles, fire ourselves with revolutionary enthusiasm, inflame the masses with revolutionary enthusiasm and thus show how to prepare for the decisive battles for power. These examples of good revolutionary work must be popularised in the most extensive manner so as to cause a revolutionary competition. The different instances of good revolutionary work must be popularised in every section of the Comintern the more so since the revolutionary movement is developing unevenly, and the danger therefore arises that certain detachments of our revolutionary army will be taken up by some particular form of struggle, which may be especially accessible, suitable and popular at the given place and at the given moment, and will prove to be incapable of quickly changing the forms of the movement under the modern conditions when the situation speedily changes and when the victory of the proletariat presupposes an ability to use every arm available in our international arsenal of struggle.

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# GREAT BRITAIN, U.S.A. AND THE WAR IN SOUTH AMERICA

By SINANI.

THE end of capitalist stabilisation, stated by the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. signifies a tremendous strengthening of the basic contradictions of imperialism and the beginning of the transition to a new cycle of revolutions and wars. In addition to a growth in internal class antagonisms, leading to the development of a revolutionary crisis, there is also an intensification of the antagonisms between the imperialists. Their backbone is the Anglo-American struggle for the hegemony of the world. The attempts to find a military "way out" of the ever-deepening economic crisis are becoming more and more imminent and palpable. The menace of a new world war has become a direct danger.

Besides the Far East, where the military annexation adventure of Japan has brought definitely on the scene the question of a new imperialist division of China, led to a tremendous intensity of Pacific antagonisms and created the direct danger of armed intervention in the U.S.S.R., a new birthplace of imperialist war is more and more plainly being created also in South America. One of its important peculiarities is the fact that at the basis of the military conflicts in South American countries lie the interests of the two leading giants of the capitalist world (England and U.S.A.).

It would, of course, be a mistake to suppose that the world war can come only through the military enlargement of those conflicts which are inspired *directly* by Anglo-American antagonisms. Such an attitude, like all other attempts to foretell in advance how and where the new imperialist slaughter will "commence" exactly, would inevitably lead to the most harmful *opportunism* in the practical work of the Communist Parties, distracting the attention of the world proletariat from *every* intensification of imperialist antagonisms, from *every* armed conflict, however small it might be. In the feverish atmosphere of the slipping of the capitalist world into a new imperialist slaughter, the Communist Parties must tirelessly explain that *every* conflict, even the smallest, may become the direct prologue for war. But so much the greater is the attention which must be paid to the conflicts in which the interests of the U.S.A. and England come into direct and immediate conflict, because it is just in these conflicts that we see most clearly the basic antagonisms in the camp of imperialism which are leading to a world imperialist war.

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The countries of South and Caribbean America play an important rôle for the U.S.A. and England as sources of cheap raw material, as spheres for the export of capital, markets for the disposal of commodities, and finally as important strategic military bases in the future war for the imperialist domination over the world. Over one-quarter of all the foreign investments of the U.S.A. (about six billion dollars) and about one-quarter of the investments of England (5.8 billion dollars) are placed in these countries. They take 8.4 per cent. of the English exports and 17.9 per cent. of the American exports, and supply 7.4 per cent. and 25.6 per cent. of the imports correspondingly (1930).

Whereas British capital investments in the countries of South and Caribbean America are 200,000,000 dollars *more* than in India; these countries play the rôle of the basic and most important colonial periphery in the system of the imperialism of the U.S.A.

The cheap mining and agricultural raw materials of Central and South America, cheap as the result of the intensively predaceous exploitation of the working class and the poor and middle peasants on a semi-feudal basis, play a most important rôle in the formation of a number of world monopolies and are therefore among the objects of an intense struggle of the world trusts.

The oil of Venezuela, Columbia, Mexico, Peru, the still almost untouched oilfields of Argentine, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chili and recently Brazil, occupy a big place in the struggle between Standard Oil and Royal Dutch Shell. *In the aggregate*, the countries of Southern and Caribbean America still occupy the second place after U.S.A. for oil output.

Twenty-five per cent. of the world exports of copper come from Chili, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and Cuba. The mining of copper is almost entirely in the hands of U.S.A. capital.

The tin of Bolivia (23 per cent. of the world supply) is one of the foundations of the world "tin monopoly" of British imperialism and one of the principal objectives of Anglo-American rivalry.

The "natural" monopoly of Chili in saltpetre (owing to natural and geographic factors) was and still is one of the chief objects of struggle between British and American capital, although its significance has fallen in the world with the growth of the production of synthetic nitrates.

The struggle of the imperialism of the U.S.A.



against the British rubber monopoly is constructed on the basis of plantations in North Brazil (e.g., Ford's plantations), communications with which in time of war would unquestionably be easier than with the American rubber plantations in Liberia, Africa.

Mexico occupies first place in the world for the output of silver, and is thus one of the chief factors in the movements of the price of this metal.

Based on Brazil, British finance capital has created a world coffee monopoly, in order to break which the U.S.A., the chief consumer of coffee, had to begin to build up coffee production in Columbia and the Central American countries almost from scratch.

A bitter struggle of the finance capital of both of the imperialist robbers is being carried on for possession of the meat packing and freezing business (Argentina and Uruguay possess 72 per cent. of the world's export of meat and meat products) and the grain market of Argentina (which has about 20 per cent. of the world's export of wheat).

The struggle for the communication lines — both the building of them and the possession of the already existing ones—forms one of the chief questions in Anglo-American rivalry in the countries of South and Caribbean America, the importance of which is emphasised by the existence in most of these countries of what is practically a railroad monopoly by British capital. There is also a sharp rivalry for the building and reconstruction of ocean ports, for electric stations (chiefly for lighting), for tramways, water supplies, and other municipal undertakings.

Finally, but by no means the least in importance, it is necessary to emphasise the enormous rôle of loans as one of the chief methods of "placing" capital and one of the most powerful means of subordinating the countries of Southern and Central America to the interests of foreign finance capital. The struggle for the "right" to grant loans, for the monopoly of giving credit to the central and local state apparatus, and also to the municipalities, forms one of the most interesting pages in the history of Anglo-American rivalry.

An enormous market for the sale of commodities and still more important territories for the export of capital (about one-quarter of all foreign investments), exceptionally important sources of raw materials, such as oil, copper, tin, saltpetre, rubber and coffee, which are of decisive importance for creating or destroying various world monopolies, and finally the important base for food supplies (especially for England)—such in the most general outline is the economic significance of the countries of Southern and Caribbean

America for British and American imperialism. Their rôle in the economic system of each of these imperialisms cannot be belittled. In the struggle for world hegemony, they are among the chief prizes. The attitude existing in the ranks of our Communist Parties towards the countries of Southern and Central America as towards a kind of isolated "world to themselves," which still exists in a number of cases, must be definitely eliminated. Though they are one of the chief objects of imperialist struggle for the re-division of the world, they are at the same time to a still greater degree, also becoming countries with a rising revolutionary movement (e.g., the formation of Soviets in Chili in July last year).

In the economic rivalry, the imperialism of the U.S.A. has achieved a series of big successes over its British competitors since the war of 1914-18. Its advance has taken place at such a rapid rate and the flow of invested capital has been so powerful that in most of the countries of Southern and Caribbean America the economic influence of British imperialism has been reduced to second place. In losing its economic position, British imperialism at the same time lost its political influence also.

In 1913, American investments in Southern and Caribbean America were 1,200 million dollars, but in 1929 they were 5,600 million dollars, i.e., they had increased by 350 per cent. British capital in the same years increased only by 18 per cent. (4,900 millions to 5,900 millions).

The penetration of capital from the U.S.A. took place most rapidly in South America. While in 1913 the capital invested there was one-sixth of the capital invested in Mexico, Central America and West Indies, in 1929 U.S.A. capital in both groups of countries had become equalised, while increasing in each group. For the sixteen years, it increased in South America by 1,226 per cent., while British capital grew only by 17 per cent. The biggest investments of the U.S.A. in these years were in Argentina (571 million dollars), Brazil (426 millions), Chili (380 millions), and Columbia (258½ millions), and then Venezuela, Bolivia and Peru. The percentage increase of its capital from 1913 to 1929 in Columbia was 12,929, Venezuela 5,252, Chili 2,604, Argentina 1,428, Bolivia 1,230, Brazil 852 and Peru 331.

The rate of growth of British investments lags considerably behind the U.S.A. It is highest in Argentina and Brazil, although even here the volume of new British investments is lower than the investments of the U.S.A.

Thus, on the eve of the world economic crisis, there was literally a precipitous economic conquest of South America by the finance capital of



the U.S.A. At the present time, British capital is greater than U.S.A. capital only in Argentine, Brazil and Uruguay (3-3½ times). In Peru, Paraguay and Equador it is about equal and in all the other countries there is a plain economic balance on the side of the U.S.A.

The change in the relationship of forces in the direction beneficial to the U.S.A. is also taking place during the present economic crisis. There are no really detailed figures on the movements of capital for this period, but all the information at hand goes to show that British investments in South and Central American countries have almost ceased, while American capital, though in much smaller volume than before the crisis, is continuing to strengthen and extend its South American positions. The continuing fall in the English pound is leading to a further weakening of the British positions and a strengthening of the influence of the American dollar. The threat of the conquest of the colonial monopoly of exploiting these countries by the imperialism of the U.S.A. is becoming more and more intense for England.

At the same time, taking advantage of the situation of the present crisis, the imperialism of the U.S.A. is hastening to strengthen and enlarge its political positions in Argentine and Brazil to the greatest possible extent so as to secure them for further economic conquest.

The conditions of crisis and, still more, the end of capitalist stabilisation are stimulating in this way the tendency towards an ever-increasing intensification of *non-economic*, i.e., political and, if necessary, *military* methods of struggle of the two imperialisms. It is precisely this international cause which explains the numerous revolutions which have been taking place in the South American countries during the last few years with almost kaleidoscopic rapidity (these international causes do not in any way, of course, remove the internal causes of these uprisings as expressions of the intensification of the group struggle in the camp of the ruling classes of the South American countries themselves under the influence of the crisis).

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To the struggle for economic interests by two imperialisms in the countries of Southern and Central America is united the struggle for them as important strategical bases in the future naval struggle of the Atlantic and Pacific. However the navies of the warring powers might be distributed—this is not the place to analyse their possible and probable combinations—in any case the Panama canal, in spite of all its shortcomings as a passage for big vessels, is the only means which can ensure the unity and manoeuvring

powers of the American navy (and the navies allied to it) between the two oceans and which can assure its strategical flexibility. Without the Panama Canal the navy of the U.S.A. is cut into two mutually disconnected parts, and the naval power of American imperialism is reduced to half.

But if the canal is the key to naval war operations in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Caribbean countries—Mexico, Cuba, the Central American states, the West Indies, Columbia and Venezuela—are the key to the Panama Canal. For this very reason every economic position of both the imperialisms in these countries obtains also a deep political and military importance. The Pan-American highways and railways which are being built and which will connect the U.S.A. with South America are clearly of a strategic character. The widespread system of American airplane routes which pass over the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific coast of Central America are provided with a suitable number of airdromes, landing parks and air-bases, and form not only a peaceful undertaking for transport and communication, but also a system for the air defence of the Panama Canal in time of war.

These same interests have in view the exerting of pressure by the U.S.A. on Columbia with the aim of not allowing British concessions in the neighbourhood of Panama. The naval base of the U.S.A. in Cuba is calculated not only on safeguarding the operations of the American navy in the Atlantic, but for its struggle for the approaches to the canal.

Such in the most general outlines are the interests connected with the Panama Canal. But the importance of Southern and Caribbean America for war is not exhausted by the question of the canal.

Naval operations in the South-Eastern part of the Pacific Ocean, e.g., various diversive operations by cruisers, will depend to a decisive degree on the possibility of relying on coal bases and especially oil bases in Peru and Chili. In case of a Japan-American war, the same rôle might be played for the Japanese navy by fuel bases on the Pacific coast of Mexico.

Finally, there is the extremely great military importance of the countries of Southern and Caribbean America as a mighty source of various minerals which are extremely necessary for carrying on war (oil, copper, tin, saltpetre) and food products (wheat, meat, maize, etc.). The latter are of special importance for England, which at present supplies its army with meat imported from Argentine.

Japan has already increased its purchases of meat and saltpetre in Argentine and Chili with the aim of establishing a rear base for its army.

In view of the sharp relations with Japan, the U.S.A. is already concluding secret military agreements with Mexico, according to which the latter undertakes to put some of its naval ports and aviation bases at the disposal of the U.S.A. for war purposes, undertakes to give support with its raw material and food resources and to put 10,000 Mexican soldiers under the command of the American military staff.

Even these points of the treaty which have become known are sufficient to destroy the widespread opinion in the countries of Southern and Caribbean America that in case of a new imperialist war they could remain neutral. They will inevitably become not only passive theatres of war operations of the imperialist armies, but also active participators in these operations. Both of the imperialisms—this can be foreseen even now—will try to make wide use of the method of preparing revolts, which will profess to be for “national independence,” but in reality will be led by hiring agents with the aim of weakening the imperialist rival. For example, England will try to support the “liberation” movement of the Central American countries, Cuba, etc., to the extent, and only to the extent that this is directed against the imperialism of the U.S.A.

Japan is at present setting itself the same aims, trying to weaken the position of the U.S.A., to make contacts with the “oppositional” bourgeois landlord cliques and bringing forward “exposures” of the “annexation plans and aggression” of North American imperialism (e.g., a pamphlet published in Mexico in Spanish directed against the U.S.A. and calculated on wide distribution in the countries of Southern and Caribbean America).

In their “peaceful” struggle, both England and the U.S.A. make wide use of the local bourgeois landlord parties and cliques with the aim of creating the best political conditions for ensuring and accelerating their economic penetration, for its consolidation, for the formation of more and more new colonial monopolies. The semi-colonial character of the countries of Southern and Caribbean America, the absence of the economic and political national unity of the biggest countries (the contacts of the various districts of one and the same country are weaker than their connections with the world market), the territorially limited economic and political influence of each of the imperialist plunderers in the various districts of one and the same country, and finally the domination of relics of feudalism in the social and economic system of these countries and the close connections of the local bourgeoisie with the semi-feudal landlords and foreign finance capital—such are the conditions which to a tremendous

extent make it easier for the imperialist to use the various bourgeois landlord groups, parties and cliques in the countries of Southern and Caribbean America for their own aims and at their own call. But to a still greater extent will the imperialists use them in case of the outbreak of war so that with their help, by the hands and the blood of the toiling masses, they will be able to inflict the greatest damage on their enemy.

The approaching new cycle of wars brings with it not only European or Asiatic conflicts but also South American wars. Along with the Far East (Japan, China, Manchuria), South America is becoming to an ever-increasing extent the focal centre for the conflagration of a world war.

During the years of the crisis, there have been very many cases of the overthrow of governments in the countries of Southern and Caribbean America, which express both the intensification of the struggle of various groups of the ruling classes to preserve and increase their share in the diminishing sum of the total income and also the intensification of the rivalry between the two imperialisms.

The U.S.A. is taking advantage of the circumstances of crisis, which have created tremendous difficulties for British imperialism, for the purpose of developing not only the economic but also the political attack on the position of its enemy. The U.S.A. has achieved an almost unchallenged monopoly on the semi-colonial exploitation of the countries of Central America and West Indies, firmly consolidating its ruling position in Mexico, Venezuela and the Pacific countries of South America (the weakest link in this chain is Peru, of which a more detailed account will be given below), and is also presenting its “right” with ever-increasing insistency with regard to Argentine and Brazil, which are the basic and at the present time the last citadels of British imperialism in South America. With the obvious sympathy of the U.S.A. (we do not know of anything more), the pro-British Irigoyen was overthrown in Argentine in 1930, and in the same year the overthrow of the government of “Paulists” which was connected with England was supported fairly openly in Brazil. In Peru, where 1931 was a year of almost continual changes of government, all the attempts of the pro-British cliques were defeated and Sanchez Cerro, the nominee of the U.S.A., continues to remain in power. In Chili the U.S.A. preserves its influence without change, considerably extending its economic positions during the last few years. In Columbia and Bolivia, power is in the hands of open agents of yankee imperialism.

The intensification of Anglo-American rivalry in South America in connection with the develop-



ment of the crisis is the fundamental cause of the regroupings among the South American countries. The traditional "A.B.C. alliance" (Argentina, Brazil, Chile), which was 'never actually formed by any treaty and which only expressed the "unity" of the dependence of these countries on British imperialism, has long since ceased to exist.

While striving to increase its influence in South America and at the same time preparing for the inevitable clash with British imperialism, the U.S.A. is stubbornly striving to build up a bloc of South American countries which are under its influence. In 1931 Chile energetically put forward the so-called "Plannett Plan" (Plannett is the Chilean foreign minister), which in the main amounted to the preparations for a South American customs alliance, connected with the interests of the U.S.A. After the breakdown of the conference which was to take place under the Plannett Plan (in connection with the fall of the dictatorship of Ibanes in Chile), the U.S.A. did not in any way give up its policy of building up an anti-British bloc. Probably the most striking example of this line of American imperialism was the conference of the central banks of Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia and Bolivia in December, 1931, which took place under the actual leadership of the finance capital of the U.S.A. The latter was represented at the conference by the not unknown Prof. Kammerer, a specialist for the "organisation and strengthening of finances," such a "reorganisation," of course, which would lead to the strengthening of the dependence of the corresponding countries on the finance capital of the U.S.A. The anti-British character of this conference is shown clearly enough by its decision to transfer all the gold reserves of the countries which took part in it from London to New York. As the gold reserves of these countries in England were very small and in any case could not have any interest for the U.S.A., the political keenness of this decision as an anti-British demonstration becomes clearer.

In building up the "Pacific bloc" (which contains Bolivia in addition to all the countries of the South American shores of the Pacific Ocean), the U.S.A. at the same time uses the greatest efforts to strengthen itself in Brazil, in which the blows of the crisis have created the most favourable circumstances for the weakening of the economic and political influence of Britain (the crisis is most intense in those very branches of Brazilian economy which are most closely connected with the finance capital of London, particularly coffee; this is dealt with in greater detail below).

The increasing attention paid by the U.S.A. to

the strengthening of its position in Brazil does not at all mean that it is prepared to recognise the so-called La Plata countries—Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay—as a sphere for British interests.

The policy of American imperialism in Southern and Caribbean America excludes any delimitation of "spheres of influence" with other imperialist bandits in the present international situation. The only "limitation" which the U.S.A. allows is the conversion of Southern and Caribbean America into a sphere for the monopolist exploitation of American finance capital. But at the present time, Brazil is the very link to the possession of which the U.S.A. attaches special importance.

In reply to the policy of building up a bloc of South American countries under the influence of the U.S.A., British imperialism is trying to break this bloc from within, to hinder the growth of American influence in every way in those countries where the struggle for political orientation is not yet decided, and finally to build up a bloc of countries under its own influence (the latter in particular by sharpening the relations of these countries with those countries which have an American orientation, a matter to which we shall return later).

One of the attempts to build up an "Atlantic" bloc (as an offset to the Pacific bloc) was, among other things, the Argentine-Brazil-Uruguay commercial and tariff conference in Spring, 1932, which was to have dealt with a series of disputed questions which had arisen in connection with the general policy of raising tariff barriers. However, the departure of the Brazilian delegation without coming to an agreement with the Argentine delegation—probably not without the backstairs influence of the U.S.A. — displayed the weakness of the position of British imperialism. The conference regulated only secondary questions, and did not to any degree bring about a change in the pro-American line of the Brazilian government.

The various and fairly numerous conflicts between the countries of South America, which, of course, have their local causes, are, however, in view of the semi-colonial situation of the whole of Southern and Caribbean America, subject to the basic inter-imperialist antagonisms. Only thus can we understand their character, which is far from fortuitous in the sense that, while often arising from third-rate disputes, they nevertheless develop further under the influence of the currents of Anglo-American rivalry.

Only in the light of Anglo-American rivalry can we understand the international significance of the Bolivia-Paraguay war, the internecine military

struggles in Brazil and the Peru-Columbia conflict which threatens to lead to a new war.

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The Bolivia-Paraguay war which has lasted already over six months is, from the point of view of the basic antagonisms of modern imperialism, a side episode in the Anglo-American rivalry and one of the indications of its growing intensification.

Bolivia in this conflict represents the interests of the U.S.A., while Paraguay acts as the weapon of British imperialism. For this very reason, therefore, the military operations in the depths of the wild jungles of Chaco obtain international interest, and precisely for this reason the Bolivia-Paraguay war carries in itself the serious menace of growing into a big military conflagration which will extend to the chief countries of South America. The actual "national" interests of Bolivia and Paraguay (i.e., the interests of their landlords and bourgeoisie) no longer play the decisive rôle in the development of the conflict, and are subordinate to the interests of the imperialist rivals and are of interest chiefly from the point of view of the history of the rise of the conflict.

Economically and politically, Bolivia is in strong semi-colonial dependence on the U.S.A. U.S.A. capital exceeds British capital over ten times. From the economic point of view, Bolivia attracts the interest of foreign finance capital above all as a big supplier of tin (it produces 23 per cent. of the world's supply). If the U.S.A. could get possession of the Bolivian tin mines, this would be the decisive step towards breaking the British world monopoly in tin. At the present time, this has already been achieved. American capital has partly acquired and partly subordinated to itself the whole of the tin mining. But the export of tin concentrates (owing to the absence of coal in Bolivia, smelting on the spot is impossible) is made extremely difficult by the position of Bolivia in the interior of the continent, without a cheap outlet to the ocean. It lost its outlet to the Pacific in the last quarter of last century as the result of the war with Chile and Peru. Although railway communication to Antafagasta (Chile) is still the main import and export artery of Bolivia, it is inconvenient owing to its dearth. The railroad crosses the mountain range of the Andes, which considerably increases freight rates. But for political reasons also, the U.S.A. is interested in another direction being taken by the attempts of Bolivia to find a cheap outlet to the ocean, without conflicting with the interests of Chile and Peru, which are in the sphere of American influence.

The line of the U.S.A. is to bring about the

greatest possible conciliation of interests between countries with an American "orientation" (i.e., in the matter of "independence"), to smooth over the antagonisms between them, to build up their bloc.

A "different" exit to the ocean, an outlet which is of great economic and political interest for the U.S.A., could be received by Bolivia at the expense of Paraguay. The Bolivian ores could find a cheaper route to the Atlantic Ocean than to the Pacific, using the river system of the latter (the Paraguay, Pilcomayo and Parana rivers). Of course, in this case also great preparatory work would be necessary—the construction of railroads from the interior of Bolivia to the rivers of Paraguay, the building of river ports and a river fleet, etc.—but all this would open up new possibilities for the investment of American capital, the absorption of new districts, tremendous profits and a strengthening of the American position in the centre of South America. American capital is the more interested in the construction of this route in particular because it provides an outlet not only for Bolivian tin, but also for the oil which has been discovered in the Bolivian-Paraguayan Chaco. The Standard Oil concession which has been received at the present time in Bolivia is already projecting to construct an oil line to the rivers which flow into the Atlantic. Finally, it is far from being disproved that in case of the construction of this oil line, it would be profitable for the future oil fields of North-West Argentina, where the Standard Oil also has interests. Such in the main are the fundamental economic interests of American capital, which in view of the vagaries of their dependence, are also the interests of the Bolivian ruling classes.

But along with direct economic interests, the policy of the U.S.A. is directed in this case also by other considerations. The formation of a "river outlet" from the central part of South America to the Atlantic is far from being solved by the defeat of Paraguay, even if this is achieved. The lower reaches of the Panama are in the hands of Argentine. But this would of itself give new possibilities to the imperialism of the U.S.A. both for a deeper penetration into Argentine and for the organisation of pressure on it.

The strengthening of the influence of the U.S.A. in the centre of South America would thus be a shaking of the British position (British influence extends only from the Atlantic) and the formation of a new route to the Argentine, which is the chief point of support of British imperialism in South America (British investments in Argentina in 1929 were 2,100 million dollars).

This is why the Bolivian-Paraguay conflict has an importance which goes far beyond the bounds



of Anglo-American rivalry in Bolivia and Paraguay themselves, and impinges on a whole series of other and bigger contradictions between the U.S.A. and Great Britain (first of all and above all, Argentine). For this very reason, none of the governments of South America is "indifferent" to the Bolivia-Paraguay dispute and therefore for this very reason the attitude taken up in the main is determined by the dependence on British and American finance capital—in Chile, sympathy is expressed for Bolivia, Argentine preserves all the formalities of neutrality and supplies arms for the Paraguay army (in which its instructors worked before the outbreak of war); Uruguay is one of the transit routes for the supply of materials and munitions of war from Europe; the pro-American position of the Vargas government in Brazil determines its sympathy for Bolivia, etc.

The Bolivian-Paraguay war thus threatens to intensify and develop the antagonisms between the two groups of South American countries, groups which have not finally taken form and have not been permanently built up, in which there are possible considerable changes (see lower on the Peru-Columbia conflict), but behind which, or rather over which, stand the main rivals in the struggle for world imperialist hegemony. The Bolivia-Paraguay war is stimulating the division of forces in South America, sharpening the existing antagonisms and accelerating the formation of both blocs. Its significance consists among other things in the fact that it has already, in the period of the slide into a new imperialist war, shown the future military division on one of the sectors of the world war front. The South American Communist Parties must take this into consideration immediately in their work.

Finally, a far from unimportant question in the Bolivia-Paraguay conflict and war is the question of oil. The demands of Bolivia for the "exact demarcation" of boundaries, i.e., for their revision, has the aim not only of an outlet to the navigable part of the river Paraguay (and in passing it may be said that the "demarcation" of frontiers has in view the annexation of almost 50 per cent. of the whole territory of Paraguay). Between the two Governments there is no natural geographical boundary. The frontier in the Chaco district passes through a semi-desert region with sparse forests, an exhausting tropical climate and a very small Indian population (the south part of Chaco belongs to Argentine). Until recently Chaco, in which no mineral wealth of any kind was suspected and which was little suited for agricultural colonisation, did not call forth special attention either from Bolivia or Paraguay. The boundary between them was extremely indefi-

nite, and between the two countries was a tremendous "disputed" territory which, however, did not cause any particular dispute.

The situation has sharply changed in the last few years. In Chaco oil has been found. Deserted, tropical Chaco was immediately converted into the object of a heated struggle of the world trusts, both British and American. Though the American Standard Oil, which has concessions in Bolivia, does not doubt that the "disputed" Chaco belongs to Bolivia, the British trusts with the same heat defend the "national" interests of Paraguay. The struggle for oil in Bolivian-Paraguayan Chaco is closely connected with Anglo-American rivalry in the north-western part of Argentine (in the Argentine part of Chaco oil is also expected). In its attempts to consolidate its influence, finance capital in the U.S.A. supports the separate tendencies of the landlords and the bourgeoisie in the north-western districts of Argentine, playing on the contradiction of their interests to the interests of the ruling clique of Buenos Ayres. Thus the rivalry around the oilfields of Chaco, like the struggle for the tin of Bolivia and for means of communication is linked up with the general question of Anglo-American antagonisms in South America.

The history of the last conflict which led to war is of no special interest. The military operations on the Bolivian-Paraguay frontier in 1928—soon after the discovery of oil in Chaco—were liquidated by the interference of the U.S.A., which was not prepared for a wide spread of the conflict. However, the "old frontier" of each country was interpreted by each in its own manner, which led to numerous border conflicts which became more frequent with the deepening of the economic crisis and the intensification of Anglo-American rivalry. In July, 1932, some isolated clashes grew into war. In both countries more and more new military units are being mobilised, a strong patriotic agitation is being carried on under the slogan of "defence" against the "perfidious" attack, etc.

Of course, it matters nothing to us who "fired the first shot." In imperialist war—and the war of Bolivia with Paraguay is a particular case of sharp imperialist rivalry in which it is not the national interests which are being defended, but the interests of finance capital of the big imperialist bandits—there is not and could not be a "defending" and an "attacking" side. Both sides are fighting for the best division for each of them of both the "disputed" and "undisputed" territory, for enlarging their own, and only their own colonial monopoly.

Military operations—in connection with the

enormous size of the territory, the absence of civilised means of communication and the relative smallness of the armed forces of both sides (about 20,000 to 25,000)—have the nature of guerrilla warfare and attacks (sieges and storms) of the border “forts” (which are more like light entrenchments of a semi-field type).

In September-October the military operations were concentrated around the Paraguayan fort of Bokeron, which was seized by the Bolivians and besieged by the Paraguayans. After a stubborn struggle, in which both sides lost about 4,000 to 5,000 men, Bokeron was occupied by the Paraguayans. The latter evidently have a number of technical military advantages. Their army is better trained (the work of the Argentine instructors), better armed, has a large number of cavalry, which gives it a great advantage in the conditions of the so-called “uncivilised” theatre of operations (absence of roads with a wide area of operations). Evidently this, together with a series of sicknesses which commenced in the Bolivian army, explains the success of the Paraguayan army, which has recently moved forward on a number of sectors of the “patchy” front.

At the present time Bolivia, having called up ten groups of conscripts, is hurriedly forming a new army of 60,000 to command which General Kundt, late instructor of the Bolivian army, has already left Germany through the U.S.A. With these new forces, Bolivia is preparing for a general advance at the front.

However, there can be no doubt that the result of the Bolivian-Paraguayan war—if it remains localised and does not grow into a general South American war conflagration—will depend not so much on any particular military successes as on the results of Anglo-American diplomatic play and negotiations behind the scenes.

Both the U.S.A. and England are trying to act in the rôle of impartial “peacemakers,” attempting to win for themselves, if not the arbitration, at any rate a mediation which will be far from unprofitable. While Yankee imperialism is hiding behind a Pan-American union, England is using the League of Nations as its screen. It is quite plain that each of the warring parties “prefers” the arbitration of its master. Paraguay replies by demonstrations of “love of peace” in appeals to the League of Nations and is deaf to the appeals of Washington. Bolivia acts in the opposite manner. Between the two sides—though the *real* sides, are the U.S.A. and England, hiding behind the Pan-American League and the League of Nations—negotiations are being carried on directly. For example, the League of Nations applied, unofficially, of course,

to the U.S.A. to have the regulation of the conflict left to it, to which the latter replied that “the cause of peace is in good hands” (“New York Times,” 17-9-32). There can hardly be any doubt that the question of the Bolivian-Paraguayan conflict is discussed by the English and American diplomats also directly, and that the real result of the war is being forged out here in particular.

However, it is quite clear that however the question of the “right” to mediation is eventually solved, whatever may be the result of military operations (up to the present there is no appearance of the possibility of the “defeat” of either side), the basic disputed question which lies at the root of this war will not be solved. The defeat of Bolivia will not compel the U.S.A. to give up its claims to Chaco and to the strengthening of its positions in Central South America, just as the defeat of Paraguay would not compel England to recognise the all-mightiness of American imperialism.

In the present international situation, in the present relationship of forces between British and American imperialism, the “liquidation” of the Bolivia-Paraguayan conflict is only possible by isolated concessions and compromises. Whoever is the “victor,” the whole aggregate of disputed questions remains. These questions will be decided on a different front of struggle, by another and much more powerful method of a world imperialist war.

But at the present time the diplomatic bargaining between England and the U.S.A. is still being carried on under the accompaniment of war. The danger of its extension, of drawing in the neighbouring countries of South America is far from being averted. The situation remains extremely strained.

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The military events in Brazil in July-October last year—the revolt of the landlords and bourgeoisie of the State of São Paulo against the Federal Government of Vargas (i.e., the central government of all Brazil), while expressing the growing group struggle among the ruling classes of Brazil, is also one of the plain episodes of Anglo-American rivalry. The Paulists (bourgeois-landlord parties of the state of São Paulo) who acted as the standard-bearers for British imperialism, were beaten after a series of intensive military actions. Owing to their defeat, the position of American imperialism in Brazil has undoubtedly strengthened.

The Paulists were in power in Brazil for a number of decades. Their chief base was the state of São Paulo, the centre of the coffee production of Brazil, which is completely dependent



on British finance capital. The close interweaving of interests connected with the production of coffee of the Brazilian landlords and bourgeoisie with the interests of British imperialism, determines the outward orientation of the Paulists. The party for carrying out the coffee monopoly, the party for securing the tremendous super-profits for the owners of the coffee plantations and English finance capital, the party of the ruthless bourgeois-landlord régime and the crushing of any revolutionary movement in the country—such is the character of the Paulist group. Coffee and England—such were the two chief planks of the Paulist platform.

The present economic crisis changed the relationship of forces between the groupings of the ruling classes in Brazil. The U.S.A. was able to utilise this change. The world agrarian crisis, in particular the sharp coffee crisis, struck at Brazil even before the advent of the world economic crisis. With the development of the latter, the situation of Brazil became disastrous. Coffee, which forms 65-70 per cent. of its exports, fell in price by over 60 per cent. Its accumulated reserve in Brazil is sufficient to satisfy the demands of the world for two to two-and-a-half years. The coffee crisis and also the crisis of all the other branches of national economy in Brazil were the cause of the extreme difficulties of the government—the unfavourable trade balance, the growing deficit of the state budget, the growth of the revolutionary discontent of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie, the discontent among some groups of landlords and bourgeoisie. The Paulists who were in power tried to use this power above all for the support of the policy of high monopolist prices on coffee by crediting the owners of coffee plantations, by regulating exports, giving credits on unsold reserves, etc. This policy called forth the dissatisfaction of the other bourgeois-landlord groups, who also made claims to the government for a “lightening” of their own position.

The U.S.A. supported the bourgeois-landlord “opposition” of the south of Brazil (where the influence of American capital is greatest). The latter succeeded in getting on its side the bourgeois-landlord groups of other states which were dissatisfied with the Paulists and using in its own interests the revolutionary discontent of the petty bourgeoisie and partly even of some sections of the working class.

In autumn, 1930, as the result of a “revolution,” the Paulists were overthrown, the newly-elected Paulist president was not permitted to take office and the power was seized by the southerners, headed by the bourgeois-landlord group of the cattle-rearing and wheat state of

Rio Grande do Sul. The masses of the urban petty bourgeoisie took an active part in the rising, which permitted the new government of Vargas to disguise itself in a “revolutionary” garb.

The class bourgeois-landlord character of the new pseudo-revolutionary government showed itself on the day following the rising. Repression against the workers’ and peasants’ movement increased.

The Paulists were overthrown, but American imperialism was not yet able to utilise the new government in its own interests. The British investments in Brazil are still over three times as large as the American. British finance capital controls almost all the foreign debt of Brazil. It possesses the chief positions in its coffee production and in the organisation of the world coffee trade. Finally, in the many decades of its rule, British imperialism had formed close contacts with the ruling classes of Brazil. It threw all its influence on preserving the previous pro-British orientation of Brazil.

For some time (1931) the Vargas government continued the foreign policy of the Paulists and orientated itself above all on England. However, the strength and means of British imperialism proved to be clearly insufficient even to maintain its positions, to be in a position to strike at its competitor. The fall of the English pound meant a further and already uncontrollable fall of English influence in Brazil. The impossibility of continuing the policy of high monopoly prices for coffee was officially recognised by the delegate of British capital, the assistant director of the British Bank, Niemayer, who was sent to reorganise Brazilian finances. The very plans of Niemayer for the “reorganisation” of the finances of Brazil came up against the impossibility of obtaining new English loans. In vain did the English bank strive in this question to obtain the “collaboration” of the financial magnates of the U.S.A. The latter did not show the least readiness to support their rival. British imperialism was not in a position to help the Brazilian landlords and bourgeoisie with anything but promises and plans.

It was exactly this powerlessness of British imperialism which led to the increased influence of the pro-American elements of the Vargas group which was in power. After the end of 1931 and the beginning of 1932, it was already possible to speak of the “American bias” of the Brazilian government, and then of its line for the support of the U.S.A. British imperialism proved to be defeated. Not having financial means for real influence on the bourgeois-landlord groups which were in power, it attempted to overthrow them by force. It found this force in the

Paulists, who had been driven from power in 1930.

The dissatisfaction of the Paulists with the Vargas government continued to increase. The latter refused to give credits to the coffee enterprises to the extent that they wanted it. It refused to buy up the enormous coffee reserves at government expense. It sought for means of keeping up coffee by export duties, i.e., at the expense of the coffee enterprises themselves. It carried on a firm policy of "interference" and appointed its own "intervener," i.e., governor, in the state of San Paulo. At the same time, the government of Vargas gave all kinds of credit and other state aid to the landlords and bourgeoisie of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Pernambuco and other states of Brazil. It was and is a weapon for the redistribution of the "national" income, unfavourable for San Paulo. It is a government of one group of Brazilian landlords and bourgeoisie (which does not prevent it being the class representative of the landlords and bourgeoisie in respect to the exploited classes). Such is the basis of the discontent of the Paulists, the source of their "revolutionariness" towards the Vargas government.

The Paulists had long ago gathered their forces for revenge. They commenced immediately after their defeat. But in the period when Vargas was playing with England, in the period when the latter still hoped to subordinate the Vargas government to its influence, the international situation did not favour an open fight.

The pro-American bias of Vargas untied the hands of the Paulists. They could already expect the support of British imperialism. The latter was itself interested in urging onward the activity of the Paulists.

We shall not here deal with a full history of the revolt and the civil war. In July the Paulists seized power in the state of San Paulo and commenced an energetic attack on Rio de Janeiro. It was unsuccessful, both owing to the resistance of the government troops and because the revolt in San Paulo was not supported by the landlords and bourgeoisie of the neighbouring states, on which the Paulists had relied (during the crisis there had accumulated a large number of differences between the Vargas government and the various cliques of the various states). The armed forces of the state of Rio Grande do Sul invaded San Paulo and diverted part of its army from the operations against Rio de Janeiro. After three months of intense military operations, which were on a scale much in excess of those on the Bolivia-Paraguay front (in them 250,000 men took part), the Paulists were defeated and were compelled to capitulate. Their attempt to obtain international

recognition as "warring parties" for the purpose of obtaining arms, failed. Only Italy announced its readiness to do this if military operations should be prolonged. The Paulist army surrendered, some of the leaders fled and some were arrested. "Order" was restored in the state of San Paulo.

The attempts of British imperialism to deal a blow at its imperialist rival by the hand of the Paulists was defeated. The U.S.A. openly supported the Vargas government during the rising. Now its connections have strengthened as well as its influence. Of course, it would be very precipitate to talk as yet of the inclusion of Brazil in the sphere of influence of the U.S.A. The British position in Brazil is still fairly strong, especially in the coffee states. British imperialism has preserved still sufficient means and influence to continue the struggle. But at the present stage the offensive of the U.S.A. in Brazil is being successfully carried on and the Anglo-Paulist attempt at revenge continues.

It is quite clear that the failure of the Paulists has not removed and not softened a single disputed question of Anglo-American rivalry in Brazil. Further, having shown up their intensity, it has at the same time shown that for their decision the "internal" forces of Brazil are entirely insufficient. For this, other forces are necessary, another scale of struggle, another situation. The struggle for Brazil, the biggest country of South America, is a part of the general Anglo-American rivalry, pregnant with a new imperialist war for world hegemony.

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The still unsolved conflict between Columbia and Peru is of special interest and of special importance. Its peculiarity is not only the fact that it may bring a new war, but the fact that both sides, while apparently coming to an agreement, are seeking for possibilities to organise war. The conflict between Columbia and Peru arose from local clashes which had not great importance for either side. It very rapidly sharpened and deepened under the influence of the ideas and needs of the ruling classes of each country which had no direct connection with it and immediately found itself subordinated in its development to the basic imperialist antagonisms in South America. However, its dependence of its development of imperialist contradictions is by no means as simple as our press frequently describes it in the countries of Southern and Caribbean America. Very often, they give way to an impermissible simplification of matters, seeing in every conflict only the struggle of British and American hirelings. The development of the Peru-Columbia conflict from the point of view of imperialist



valry can only be understood in connection with the whole interweavings of the Anglo-American struggle in South America.

The formal excuse for the conflict is the seizure of the Colombian town of Letisi, on the River Amazon, near to the Peru-Columbian frontier, by the border troops of the Peruvian government (by means of disguised soldiers). This "port" through which in actual fact nothing is exported or imported, has been the subject of Peruvian-Columbian disputes for many years. Until the recent seizure Peru formally recognised the rights of Colombia, which permits the government of Colombia to make specially energetic attacks on the treachery and deception of Peru at the present juncture.

We have not the slightest inclination or desire to examine the question of who "should" own this "port" and whose claims to it are most just."

To understand the real causes of the development of the conflict it is important to emphasise that whatever the decision of the question, it will not touch on any vital interests. In different international and home circumstances, the incident would have remained the subject of a lively and heated diplomatic discussion, but nothing more. The whole of the economy of Colombia has an orientation to the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. Practically no trade goes along the Amazon. The economic conditions of the border districts of Brazil and Colombia are those of hunting (tropical forests with a very sparse population of hunting tribes of Indians), and do not lead to trading. Finally, the district of Letisi itself is practically composed of impassable virgin forest.

The town plays a very small rôle of "outlet" on the Amazon for Peru also. All the trading routes tend towards the Pacific Ocean. Of course, there are local groups and cliques of the ruling classes which are interested in possessing the "disputed" territory and the "port," but in any case the rôle of these groups and cliques is insignificant in controlling the policy of the country. They do not enter into the question. For both sides, the incident of the seizure of the "port" of Letisi is only a pretext for the development of the conflict, for sharpening it, for organising war. This is the extent of its significance, however much both sides may swear that the incident affects the "interests of the state."

The real causes of the rapid sharpening of the conflict is above all in the internal situation of Colombia and Peru in connection with the development of the economic crisis.

The crisis, which has struck at Colombia, whose chief exports are coffee and also bananas and oil, has led to the disorganisation of the whole econo-

mic life of the country. The fall of incomes has led to a state deficit, the impossibility of paying external debts, or receiving new loans, to the fall of the total sum of receipts by the ruling classes and their attack on the standard of life of the proletariat and the peasants. As a result, in the last two years there has been going on in Colombia a rapid growth of the mass revolutionary movement, on the one hand, and a sharpening of the group struggle in the camp of the ruling classes on the other hand. The situation of the government of Olaya Erero, an open agent of the U.S.A., is becoming more and more difficult. The way out of these internal difficulties is being sought in the organisation of war. The incident of the seizure of Letisi by the Peruvians is taken advantage of for the very reason that by means of external complications the government can get out of difficulties at home. The war must, in the calculations of the ruling clique, lead to the consolidation of the bourgeois-landlord groups of the country, call forth a patriotic upsurge of the petty bourgeois masses and create favourable conditions for the savage suppression of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants.

The same causes heat up the war feelings in Peru, at which the world economic crisis has struck as an exporter of copper, oil, sugar, and cotton. The struggle of the clique of the ruling classes of Peru has caused a whole series of government changes—Peru took first place in South America for them in 1931. The nominee of American imperialism, Sanchez Serro, who has come to power, has to carry on a continual struggle against opponent bourgeois-landlord groups, especially against the so-called Apra, which is connected with British imperialism and has wide influence on the masses on account of its social demagoguery.

At the same time, Peru takes one of the first places of all the South American countries in the high development of its movement of the workers and peasants and the national-Indian movement (the basic masses of Peru are Indians). In spite of severe repression, the revolutionary upsurge continues to develop more and more.

Thus, there is a touching unity between the two governments which are preparing for war with regard to the motives driving them to strive to start up a war. War as an attempt to organise a way out of the economic and political difficulties which have been created and are still being created by the crisis — such is the real cause of the sharpening of the Peru-Columbia conflict, for which the incident of the seizure of the town of Letisi was nothing but a convenient pretext.

In both countries chauvinist agitation is being carried on under the slogan of "defence" from the

attacks of the neighbour. In both countries patriotic loans have been issued, partial mobilisation has been carried on, and military units have been dispatched to the border districts. War is being prepared for absolutely openly, without attempting to avert it by diplomatic negotiations. What both governments need is not the disputed port on the Amazon but a war as the only panacea against internal contradictions and difficulties.

But the driving forces of the Peru-Columbia conflict are not exhausted by the interests of the ruling clique of each country. Its development is subject to the basic imperialist antagonisms. The interests of the U.S.A. and England and their policy play a decisive rôle. However, the interweaving of Anglo-American antagonisms in the present case is much more complex than in the Brazilian events and the Bolivian-Paraguayan war.

Both Columbia and Peru belong to the group of countries which are in the sphere of influence of American imperialism. We also see that the U.S.A. is carefully building up a bloc of Pacific countries, the edge of which is directed against Britain and the countries which are under its influence. Their consolidation has the aim both of strengthening the economic influence of the finance capital of the U.S.A. and the task of forming a military striking arm which, in case of war, could be directed against the positions of British imperialism.

The organisation of possible military bases on the territory of the South American continent is one of the main tasks and the policy of both of the giants of imperialism. While the U.S.A. is trying to strengthen the bloc of Pacific countries (together with Bolivia) as a weapon for its policy, the task of British imperialism is not only to form its own bloc, but also to break up the pro-American groups. It is exactly these tasks which determine the line of policy of England and the U.S.A. in the Peru-Columbia conflict.

Peru is the weakest and most vulnerable link in the bloc built up by the U.S.A. American investments in Peru are only slightly in excess of English investments. At the same time the latter have been trustified by the monopolist "Anglo-Peruvian Co." and therefore it has considerable striking force in the struggle against its competitor.

English capital and influence unquestionably dominate in South Peru. The pro-English groups, particularly a number of groups in the army, continue an active struggle for power. Apra, which comes out with demagogic statements against American imperialism and thus exploits the anti-imperialist feelings of the masses, in reality does not carry on a struggle against British imperialism

and is prepared to "collaborate" with it. Although the U.S.A. has overtaken England economically, although it has secured the post of president for its candidate, Sanchez Serro, nevertheless it has not the same decisive advantage over its competitor as in Mexico, Columbia or Chile. For this very reason, Peru is the weakest link in the bloc which the U.S.A. is building up. Naturally, it is just in this place that British policy, which is striving to break up this bloc, can have the greatest success.

British imperialism is thus interested in the outbreak of war between Peru and Columbia. It would break down the rapprochement of the Pacific countries of South America which is advantageous for the U.S.A. It would lead to the strengthening of pro-English feelings in Peru, because British imperialism could declare its sympathy towards Peru while the U.S.A. would be compelled to manoeuvre, for the preservation of influence on Columbia (a neighbour of the Panama Canal), which is not less important for it than the strengthening of its influence in Peru. War with the support or even the open sympathy of England would strengthen the position of all the pro-British cliques and would give them additional chances of success in the struggle for power. Finally, war between Peru and Columbia could not take place "next door," so to speak, parallel to the Bolivian-Paraguayan war. We have already seen above that the latter is not looked on with indifference, that, on the contrary, it considerably hastens the process of the splitting of the South American states into English and American groups. This applies in a smaller extent to the Peru-Columbian war. The existence, in Peru particularly, of a large number of disputed questions with Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile, which, among other things, makes Peru into the weakest link of the bloc which is being built up by the U.S.A. in case of war, creates favourable conditions for its extension. The policy of British imperialism is based on this, hoping by provocation of a war between Peru and Columbia to tear apart the whole system of the American groups.

The imperialism of the U.S.A., on the contrary, is not interested in the present conflict turning into war for the same reasons which make England welcome it. The probability of drawing Peru into the sphere of British influence in case of the outbreak of a Peru-Columbian war obviously disquiets the U.S.A. imperialists. Moreover, in the bloc built up by the U.S.A. in South America, Peru is not only the weakest link, but it also plays an extremely important rôle as a key position from a military strategical viewpoint. It is Peru which forms the connection, the bridge, between the countries of the Caribbean Sea, which are



questionably under the influence of the U.S.A., and the northern part of South America, together with Bolivia and Chile. The breaking of this "bridge" would lead to the strategical isolation of Bolivia and Chile, to the extremely dangerous encirclement of Bolivia. Joint action by Peru and Paraguay against Bolivia would put it in danger of serious military defeat. Moreover, the plans of the U.S.A. for strengthening its position in the central part of South America (which we discussed when examining the Bolivian-Paraguay conflict) are built on the calculation that Bolivia can be made into a base. Its defeat would mean tremendous strengthening of the British position. The dilemma which faces the imperialism of the U.S.A. is either to prevent such a situation arising or, if it nevertheless arises, to take steps for the rapid spread of the South American war (dragging in Chile, Brazil and Argentine).

The question of the position of Peru at the present juncture is one of the basic questions of Anglo-American rivalry. The key to this position is in the situation which has arisen in the Peru-Columbia conflict.

Under different circumstances, if relations with England were less strained, if the relations between the countries of South America were less tangled into a single knot, the U.S.A. might be able to count on the Peru-Columbian conflict leading to the increase in the dependence of both countries on it (military supplies, loans, mediation, etc.). Under present conditions, however, this war is definitely not to the interests of the U.S.A.

This determines the "peaceloving" attitude of the U.S.A. and its efforts to bring about a diplomatic regulation of the Peru-Columbian conflict. It is evidently its influence which explains the somewhat unexpected pacific statement of Sanchez Serro that Peru is prepared to submit to an arbitration decision.

It is as yet too early to speak of the most probable result of the conflict, although there is every chance that the U.S.A. will bring about a softening of the situation. Circumstances sometimes compel even the most militant imperialism to come forward in the rôle of "peacemaker," but

naturally at times when this is to its own interest.

The anti-Peru feeling which reigns in Ecuador, which has a series of territorial disputes with Peru, the dispatch of a warship up the Amazon by Brazil with a landing party of infantry to the Peru-Columbian-Brazilian frontier, the attention which is paid to the Peru-Columbian conflict by the press of South America, all show that the real importance of the conflict reaches far beyond the confines of the relations between the two countries and affects the whole tangle of government relations in South America. The whole of the circumstances, both international and South American, create a menacing danger of the extension of the war. The Peru-Columbian conflict, more than any other, is pregnant with this danger, for it touches the whole aggregate of South American antagonisms and also international antagonisms.

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The period of the end of capitalist stabilisation, the period of the rapid maturing of a new cycle of revolutions and wars, sets all Communist Parties the urgent and vital task of struggling against war. One of the necessary sides of this task is an unbending and concrete explanation to the proletariat and the broad working masses of all countries of the real danger of the outbreak of a new imperialist slaughter. The military operations and the threat of the spread of the conflicts and war in South America, behind which are concealed the basic imperialist rivals who direct them in their struggle for world hegemony, are rapidly converting South America, along with the Far East, into one of the most dangerous hotbeds of world war.

In the present conditions, the attention of the proletariat should be paid to every threatening conflict of war. We cannot know through what door and on what pretext the rapid spread of war will come. Only by mobilising the attention of the proletariat to every imperialist conflict will the Communist Parties be able to really organise their activity. The conditions of the birth of a new imperialist war, the state of slipping into war, requires from the Communist Parties untiring and vigilant attention to the concrete sharpening of international relations.

(Continued from page 84.)

We must sharply criticise the documents of the Communist Parties since the XII. Plenum, because in them the question of checking up on the fulfilment of decisions and the question of cadres are either not raised at all or are raised in a most general form.

The international conditions categorically require all the Communist Parties of capitalist countries to put an end rapidly and decisively to such a state of affairs, when a correct political

line is left in the air because no one takes the trouble to carry it into practice, when the most important decisions, after being adopted unanimously, are worked up only in the form of circulars, etc. Every Party member, and above all every member of the Party leadership, must be responsible for the Party business given to him, must answer with his unstained Party reputation, for being on leading work and finally for his right to remain in the ranks of the Communist vanguard.

# VITAL PROBLEMS OF OUR WORK WITHIN THE REFORMIST TRADE UNIONS

By S. PEREVOSNIKOV

THE XIIth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. laid special emphasis on the task of strengthening the work of the Communist Parties and revolutionary movement within the reformist trade unions. The Plenum not only proceeded from the fact that it is generally the duty of Communists to work wherever the masses are to be found, as the Comintern has repeatedly pointed out, but it emphasised particularly the growing importance and the growing possibilities of this work under the conditions of the end of the partial stabilisation of capitalism, when the fundamental task of the Communist vanguard consists of the preparation of the masses for decisive battles for the proletarian dictatorship through the development of economic and political struggles.

The editorial of the *Communist International* entitled *The End of Capitalist Stabilisation and the Economic Struggles* (No. 19) has already dealt, in a considerable detail, with those Right opportunist and "left" sectarian policies which prevented, and in many places still prevent, the development of the revolutionary work within the reformist trade unions, and indicated the general tasks and methods of this work. In this article we wish to deal with certain immediate problems of the struggle for winning the workers organised in the reformist trade unions, particularly in Germany, whose working class is fighting in the front line of the international proletarian revolution. Our discussion will be based upon concrete data.

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To successfully effect a change in the work within the reformist trade unions, and victoriously fight for the capture of the masses within them, it is necessary first of all, to take the *social changes* which have taken place during the last period among the *masses* of the workers organised in the reformist trade unions, into account.

The reformist trade unions have always embraced, on the whole, the masses of skilled and semi-skilled workers. The allegation that the entire mass of workers organised in the reformist trade unions constituted a labour aristocracy was entirely absurd and harmful. This *was never* the case. Among the mass of skilled workers, there has come to the top a numerically rather small but highly influential section of highly skilled and better-paid workers known as the labour aristocracy who, together with the Social-Democratic Party and trade union bureaucracy, were connected with the bourgeoisie and exercised a bourgeois influence over large masses of workers. The fact that the trade union member-

ship was recruited, for the most part, from skilled and semi-skilled workers, rather than from the great masses of the underpaid proletarians with the lowest standard of living, merely facilitated the dissemination and consolidation of the influence of the labour aristocracy over the bulk of the organised workers. Among this mass of workers it was easier to spread the illusion that social reforms under capitalism create a solid foundation for the "constant" rise of their living standard, and insured the peaceful evolution of capitalism into socialism.

Capitalist rationalisation, the world economic crisis, the fast and very apparent absolute and relative impoverishment of the working-class, and the end of the period of social reforms inflicted a powerful blow, both at the mass of skilled workers as well as the highly-skilled strata. Millions of skilled workers have been drawn into the vast army of starving unemployed along with unskilled workers. All this affected the masses organised in reformist trade unions. Unemployment, destitution, starvation, swept these masses as well, in a certain measure.

In the German reformist trade unions unemployment has grown in recent years as follows, according to the Year Book of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions for 1931 (published at the end of this year):

Year.	Percentage of Unemployed Trade Union Members.		
Dec., 1929	....	....	14.4
Dec., 1930	....	..	27.8
Dec., 1931	....	....	38.2
Sept., 1932	....	....	44.1

This means that half the membership of the reformist trade unions were unemployed in 1932. In many of the unions three-quarters of the membership were unemployed. This applies particularly to those unions which embrace workers of the so-called "seasonal groups." In the unions of this group (building workers, carpenters, stone masons, pottery workers, painters) the percentage of unemployed has grown as follows: 1930 (average) 48 per cent., 1931 67.5 per cent., September, 1932, 75 per cent. In the building workers' union the largest of these organisations, with a membership of 400,000, the unemployed constituted 77.6 per cent. of the membership.

In the key industries the percentage of unemployed is also exceedingly large. The average percentage of unemployed trade union members in the so-called "conjunctural group" of industries (metal workers, miners, chemical workers, textile workers, transport



workers, etc.) was as follows: 1930 (average for year) 7.4 per cent., 1931, 27.4 per cent., September, 1932, 7 per cent. In the most important unions of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions the percentage of unemployment in September, 1932, was as follows:

Metal Workers' Union	....	48.7
Miners' Union	....	19.7
Textile Workers' Union	....	34.8
Transport Workers' Union	....	18.2
Chemical Workers' Union—		
Basic Chemistry	....	33.5
Glass Workers	....	52.5

The smallest percentage of unemployed among the unions of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions is shown by the miners and transport workers; the number of unemployed in the metal workers' union, the biggest reformist trade union in Germany, is far above the average number of unemployed organised workers in the "conjunctural group" of industries.

To this should be added the unprecedented partial unemployment among trade union members, which in July, 1932, amounted in the "conjunctural group" to 48.1 per cent. of the employed trade union members. In the most important unions partial unemployment affects more than half, or nearly half, of the membership. Thus in June, 1932, the percentage of partially unemployed members of the metal workers' union was 29.0, of the miners' union 30.7, of the textile workers' union 42.3. In the transport workers' union the part-time workers constituted 20.2 per cent. In the summer and autumn of this year the percentage of part-time workers was somewhat smaller. And since the percentage of part-time workers is shown not in relation to the total trade union membership, but only to the employed members of the trade union, the above data show that *about 70 per cent. of the entire membership of the reformist trade unions are either totally or partially unemployed.*

It is very difficult to show the numerical relation of the unemployed members of the trade unions, to the total number of unemployed in the country, though this would be extremely important in defining the social changes taking place among the German proletariat. The trade unions are far more precise in recording unemployment among their members than are the governmental statistical departments in relation to the total unemployment, who usually publish clearly under-estimated figures. It would be incorrect, however, to assume that the percentage of unemployed among the trade union members is lower than among the working-class as a whole. It is necessary to remember that particularly among the workers of the so-called seasonal group of industries, in which unemployment is the highest, the percentage

of organised workers is especially large (the carpenters are almost 100 per cent. organised, the building workers, too, are well organised). Because of this, the relative importance of the workers of these industries in the All-German Federation of Trade Unions is greater than it is among the working-class as a whole. *In the factories the reformist trade unions have not only not become relatively less powerful, but according to many indications, their strength has even grown.* And this is understandable. For the employers realise that the influence of the reformist trade union bureaucracy is the strongest among the workers organised in the reformist unions. Figuring that the trade union bureaucracy will succeed in keeping these workers out of the struggle, and utilising them to frustrate the strike movement, they hunt the members of the revolutionary trade union opposition and the Red unions out of the factories, first of all, and are more apt to sack a non-unionist than a union member. Data relating to various factories, quoted at the conference of the Communist Party of Germany, corroborates this. For instance, at the *Vege sack* shipyard in Hamburg, which formerly employed 20,000, of whom 6,000 were organised (30 per cent.) now employs 5,000, of whom between 2,500 and 3,000 are organised (50 to 60 per cent.). The same situation exists in Kiel, where the percentage of organised workers in 1928 was 60, while in 1932, after the reduction of staff, it rose to 80. In Rostok there were in a certain factory 900 union members out of a total force of 1,200 in 1928 (75 per cent.), while now 490 out of 500 are unionised. On the other hand, in the Von der Beck enterprise in the Ruhr, in which there was a group of the revolutionary trade union opposition consisting of thirty-eight members, no fewer than 32 of them were sacked among 53 who were discharged, while the members of the reformist and Christian unions were not affected at all.

From this point of view it is highly interesting to note the fact that among the various districts of Germany the percentage of unemployed members of the reformist trade unions is higher in East Prussia (30.7 per cent.) and Pomerania (33 per cent.) and lowest in Westphalia (24.8 per cent.), and in the Rhine Province (25.3 per cent.). In the matter of partial unemployment an opposite situation exists: Westphalia (29.4 per cent.), and the Rhine Province (26.5 per cent.) hold the first places, while East Prussia (10.8 per cent.) and Pomerania (9 per cent.) are at the very bottom. This is due, in the least degree to the condition of unemployment in the farm workers' union in the agricultural districts, where unemployment is relatively on the same level as in a number of industrial unions. Unemployment among the city proletariat in the industrial areas is not much lower than it is in the Eastern parts of Germany.

What is revealed here primarily is the tendency to leave the members of reformist trade unions in employment, precisely in those regions where the influence of the Communist Party over the working masses is especially strong, and the services of the reformist trade union bureaucracy, in restraining the organised workers from engaging in struggles in the factories, are particularly valued by the bourgeoisie. For the lower Rhine and the Ruhr are, together with Berlin, those areas of Germany where the Communist Party is especially influential among the proletariat. And, as the latest movements in the Krupp factory have revealed, whenever workers are discharged, the employers of these districts readily retain a part of the membership of the reformist trade unions, who are subject to dismissal, on part-time work, and discharge others in their place.

In the light of these facts the enormous importance of the revolutionary work within the trade unions to the organisation of the struggle in the factories, the decisive section of the front, becomes particularly apparent.

The sops thrown by the employers of certain enterprises to a definite section of the members of the reformist trade unions, when discharging them, cannot essentially change the fundamental facts of *the unprecedented impoverishment and collapse of all the former beliefs on the relative security of the organised reformist workers*, who are, for the most part, skilled. The decline in the living standards of these masses is testified also by the changes which have taken place among the membership of the reformist trade unions in respect to wages they received. Since the German reformist trade unions collect dues on the basis of skill and rate, the reduction of wages of the members of the reformist trade unions may be judged, in a certain measure, by the changes in the total sum of membership contributions. According to the data of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions the picture here is as follows:

Year. Membership dues paid (in percentage of the total membership).

		From			
	Exempt-	Up to	10.40	From 26	Over
	ted	10.40 M.	to 26 M.	to 52 M.	52 M.
1930	—	9.3	10.1	29.8	50.8
1931	4.6	15.8	13.9	29.3	36.4

Thus, in 1931, there was a reduction of the number of members paying the highest dues (and therefore receiving the highest wages), together with a growth of the lower groups with regard to wages, a stability of the middle group, and the appearance, for the first time, of a new group of members who pay no dues, that is unemployed members of certain unions who are entirely exempt from the payment of dues. This re-grouping was caused not only by a

growth of unemployment, but also by the reduction and increasing levelling down of the workers' wages.

All of these facts taken together strikingly illustrate the extent to which the basis of the influence of the reformist trade union bureaucracy over the masses organised in the reformist trade unions has been *objectively* shaken.

A very important indication of the political changes developing on this basis among the membership of the unions is provided by the growing desertion of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions by its members.

During 1931 the unions affiliated with the All-German Federation of Trade Unions lost 582,000 members (12.3 per cent.). Can this loss be explained only by unemployment? ("The unemployed find it difficult to pay dues"), as the social-fascist leaders and their Brandlerite satellites have been attempting to do for a number of years? No doubt the terrific unemployment does play an important part in this, *but not the decisive part*. Many facts confirm this. To begin with, it is necessary to note that the loss of membership involves, above all, women and youths organised in the reformist trade unions. If the All-German Federation of Trade Unions lost in 1931 12.3 per cent. of its total membership, the loss of organised working women was equal to 14.7 per cent. and that of youths to 22.3 per cent. At the same time, according to the data published by the Trade Union Federation itself, unemployment among the organised working women in 1932 amounted to 25.6 per cent., being considerably below that among working men (36.4 per cent.). Among the youths unemployment is still lower. In five unions the unemployed are entirely exempted from membership dues; for instance, in the textile workers' union over 100,000 unemployed members pay no dues, yet the union lost 20,000 members in 1930 and 30,000 members in 1931 (10.9 per cent.). That it is not the level of unemployment in the unions which has the decisive influence upon the desertion of members is revealed also by the fact that the highest loss in membership has been sustained by the union of engineers and firemen which lost 24.7 per cent. of its members, while the railroad men's union lost 15.3 per cent., that is, more than the average loss for all the unions affiliated with the All-German Federation. In these unions unemployment is relatively lower than in the others. The same is shown by the loss of 14 per cent. of membership by the miners' union which, as already stated above, holds one of the last places in the Trade Union Federation with regard to unemployment. On the basis of these figures it is possible to establish first, that the causes of the withdrawal from the reformist unions are by no means limited to the enormous unemployment, second, that the more oppressed masses (women,



uths) are particularly apt to leave the unions, third, among the highly skilled workers, too, who are especially susceptible to the reformist illusions, and so regarded the reformist trade union as a bulwark against a reduction of their relatively high living standards, disillusionment rapidly grows with the consequent withdrawal from the unions (engineers, women, etc.). The mass withdrawal from the reformist trade unions primarily constitutes an expression of protest against, and distrust for, the policy of the social-fascist leadership. It is closely connected with the turn of the masses away from social-democracy. This is strikingly illustrated by the fact that one of the first places in regard to loss of membership is held by the Saar Valley (22.2 per cent.) where the social-democracy sustained a crushing defeat in the elections to the provincial Landtag last November, and lost relatively more votes than in any other part of Germany, followed by the Düsseldorf district (17.2 per cent.), Berlin (13.1 per cent.), the Ruhr (the miners' union) that is by districts in which the influence of social-democracy has been most seriously undermined. And precisely in these districts, according to the All-German Federation of Trade Unions (see above) is total unemployment among the trade union members lower than in the other districts. No doubt the deepening of the crisis, the new and accelerated withdrawal of the masses from social-democracy in 1932, found expression this year as well in a fresh loss of membership to the reformist trade unions.

It should be said that in the face of the unparalleled treachery of the reformist trade union bureaucracy, an even greater withdrawal from the reformist trade unions might have been expected. In December, 1931, the All-German Federation of Trade Unions still had 4,134,902 members. This was a huge army. Apart from its still very strong political influence over the organised workers, the reformist leadership has a number of levers to keep the workers in the trade unions headed by them. In 1931 the unions affiliated to the All-German Federation of Trade Unions paid out various benefits to the amount of 109,000,000 marks (13,000,000 less than in 1930). Of this sum 69,000,000 (62.9 per cent.) constituted unemployment benefits, 27,100,000 sickness benefits, 11,400,000 disablement benefit, etc. It is noteworthy that while the expenditures on all other forms of benefits fell off absolutely, the sum of benefits paid to disabled persons increased both absolutely and relatively (10.4 per cent. of all the benefits against 6.4 per cent. in 1930). Here is revealed, among other things, the special care taken by the reformist leadership to keep in the unions the disabled members whom they usually attract to election meetings in the hope of receiving their votes (as was the case with the elections to the metal workers' congress in a number

of parts of Thuringia). The importance of this large sum of benefits paid to keep members in the trade unions should not be under-estimated. The reformist trade unions, which have practically scrapped the weapon of strikes from the arsenal of struggles for the daily demands of the workers have strengthened the so-called legal service to their members. In 1931 they registered 1,200,000 cases of legal aid rendered by the trade unions. Another measure to lessen the desertion of the members from the trade unions has been the exemption of unemployed from membership dues in five unions and the reduction of the dues paid by the unemployed members to from 10 to 20 pfennigs in the other unions.

One of the most important levers of the reformist leadership in retaining the masses within the unions and maintaining their influence over them is the attachment of the *active* members to the trade unions. According to the data published by the All-German Federation of Trade Unions at the beginning of 1932 there were 200,000 functionaries representing the trade unions in different bodies, 50,000 in the social insurance departments, 10,000 on various chambers of commerce committees, 10,000 in labour courts, 5,000 in training school committees, 2,000 in labour departments, etc. These functionaries, some of whom, according to the All-German Federation of Trade Unions, are unemployed, receive a certain monetary compensation from the trade unions for their work. The Year Book of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions declares that this compensation "totals up to a large sum" (p. 190). In addition, the reformist trade unions have 300,000 factory committee members, elected on their ticket, no small percentage of whom are exempted from ordinary duties. As regards the permanent paid staff of the reformist trade unions, which directs the work of this half million body of activists both politically and organisationally, it was left practically intact in 1931, despite the large loss of membership and the reduction of the union revenues. What tremendous importance the reformist leadership attaches to the maintenance of its apparatus and the material security and interestness of a section of the active trade union members may be gauged from the fact that the expenditure on the apparatus, and compensation to the activists, known as the administration expenditures, constitute 53,400,000 marks (24.8 per cent.), having been reduced only 0.4 per cent. compared with the previous year, while the reduction of benefits in a number of fields amounted to 3 per cent. and over.

The further fascisation of the reformist trade union bureaucracy finds its reflection, among other things, in the fact that, under the conditions of the frenzied offensive of the bourgeoisie upon the living standards of the working-class, the expenditures of the reformist

trade unions on economic struggles were only one-fifth of those on the apparatus, amounting to 10,500,000 marks or 4.9 per cent. of the total expenditure. If we take a closer look at this figure we will see that the expenditures on strikes sanctioned by the trade unions were even smaller than this already miserable figure. Of this sum 2,300,000 marks were used for various negotiations and victimisation benefits, 3,800,000 marks for lock-outs and only 4,400,000 marks (about 2 per cent. of the total expenditure) on strikes. Every Communist and revolutionary trade union activist must know these figures and bring them to the knowledge of the organised working masses so as to expose the real meaning of the policies of the social-fascist trade union bureaucracy.

All of these rather important levers would not have helped the leadership to keep the millions in the reformist trade unions had it not been for the belief of a considerable section of organised labour that these trade unions nevertheless are, or could become, centres of resistance to the capitalist offensive. Tens and hundreds of thousands of organised workers, including the militants (activists) are already rebelling against the policy of the leadership, are being drawn into strikes led by the revolutionary trade union opposition, have expressed their protests in one way or another against the social-fascist leaders; but do not turn away from the organisation. Other tens and hundreds of thousands have not yet perceived the roots, and essence of the treachery of the social-fascist leaders. The entire objective situation makes a speedy increase of the ranks of the former, and a reduction of the number of the latter possible. This cannot take place automatically, however. This process must be headed and organised by the consistent and day-to-day work of the revolutionary trade union opposition within the unions.

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During the last period, owing to the general intensification of the class struggle and acceleration of the growth of the revolutionary upsurge in Germany, the fundamental processes in the reformist trade unions have been developing with special speed. At one pole, among the lower masses, there is a rapid growth of destitution and fermentation. At the other pole there is a deepening fascisation of the reformist leadership. The nationalist speech delivered in Bernau by Leipart, president of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions, a speech addressed not so much to the students of the central trade union school as to the leaders of German fascism, his overtures to the leaders of the "legalist" wing of the Hitlerites, Gregor Strasser, the conversation between the leaders of the Trade Union Federation and General Schleicher and their determined policy of supporting the "social general" who leads

the military-fascist dictatorship, the demand of the "theoretician" of the reformist trade unions, Tarnow, to give the fascist Government "a chance to realise its measures," the open strike-breaking attitude of the trade unions during the Berlin strike of the transport workers, all this shows how speedily the leaders of the German reformist trade union movement are following in the footsteps of D'Arragona. At the same time the masses of the workers organised in the reformist trade unions more and more frequently engage, contrary to the will of their leaders, in strikes, conjointly with other workers, under the leadership of the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition. In the Berlin transport workers' strike there were 6,000 organised workers, of a total of 22,000 strikers. In the strike of the Hamburg transport workers 90 per cent. of the struggling workers were members of the reformist trade unions. In 773 strikes conducted in Germany between September 15 and November 1 of this year, tens of thousands of reformist trade union members took part.

The basic question consists in the extent to which the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition are able, under the present conditions, to organise the union masses for the struggle against the social-fascist leadership, to undermine its influence over the masses and capture new positions within the unions and the masses of organised workers.

The German Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition, since the June Plenum of the latter, and particularly since the XIIth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., have been focussing the attention of their organisations upon the struggle within the reformist trade unions, for the capture of the organised workers, and new positions. At the National Conference of the Communist Party, a number of district Party conferences, the October Plenum of the National Committee of the Revolutionary Trade Union opposition and in many organs of the Party and revolutionary trade union press, considerable attention has been devoted to this problem.

Here and there a certain improvement in this work may be recorded, such as speeches by opposition comrades at trade union meetings, the advancement of various demands there, the adoption of resolutions in favour of struggle, of the reinstatement of expelled members, the delegation of representatives from the trade union meetings to opposition conferences organised by the Communist Party against Leipart's speech, etc. (the railroad men of Dortmund, the gas workers of Berlin, the carpenters of Bochum, the machinists of Witterveld, certain trade union meetings of the metal workers, etc.). But these are only isolated instances. Comrade Thälmann was right when he stated at the Party conference that no



practical change, no broad development of the opposition work within the unions is yet to be observed. Let us consider some fields of this work.

Of certain importance to the strengthening of our work within the reformist trade unions is the invigorating of those *few local organisations of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions which are led by Communists, and adherents of the revolutionary trade union opposition*. After the last Plenum of the National Committee of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition, it was pointed out that these organisations exceed 250 in number of which 110 have already been registered during the recent registration carried out by the National Committee. If it be remembered that the unions of the All-German Federation have 13,129 local branches, we will see that the number of locals captured by us is still quite negligible. This is a reflection of the weakness of the work of the revolutionary trade union opposition within the reformist unions over a long period. However, the political significance of these positions is quite considerable. Many organised workers judge the policies and activities of the adherents of the revolutionary trade union opposition by what they are doing, and will do, when they replace the reformists in the leadership of the local organisations. Passivity or an incorrect policy on the part of the Communists and adherents of the revolutionary trade union opposition in these organisations discredits the opposition, and renders it difficult for it to capture new positions in the reformist trade unions. It must be noted that the overwhelming majority of the leaderships of these local branches have failed to pursue the policy of the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition for a long period, and remain inactive to this day. As before, they do not yet devote themselves to the organisation of a struggle against the degradation of the labour conditions, the development of the unemployed movement, the struggle for inner union democracy, and against the reformist trade union leadership. The first attempts of the Communist Party and of the revolutionary trade union opposition to instil some vigour in the work of these branches met with opportunist opposition on the part of a section of the comrades leading them. Thus, in the district of Hessen-Frankfurt, the leaders of a number of local T.U. branches controlled by us refused to issue a call for strikes against the fascist terror because, they maintained, "as organisations affiliated to the All-German Federation of Trade Unions they must await a strike call from the federation." The leader of the textile workers' union in Bernstadt, which is controlled by the trade union opposition, refused to take any steps to prepare a strike declaring :

"I am materially connected with the textile workers' union and if I am removed from office, as a

result of a strike, I will lose my union benefits."

The opposition leadership of the textile workers' union of Lambrecht, Baden, refused to advance the opposition demand for the organisation of a struggle, on the plea that :

"Should we speak in defence of the demand of the revolutionary trade union opposition, we shall lose our influence in the union."

The leader of an opposition branch in Thuringia, in the face of open strike-breaking activities on the part of the reformist trade union bureaucrats, refused to come out against them for the following "reasons" :

"I am not so foolish as to come out against the labour fakers ; should I do this I will immediately find myself outside the union."

Many other examples of this kind could be cited. Neither in the case of the emergency decrees, at the time of the particular rise of the fascist terror ; during the strike of the Berlin transport workers, nor even in the face of the negotiations conducted by the leaders of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions and the fascists, did the majority of these local organisations display any revolutionary political activity.

Seven cartels\* of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions in different parts of Thuringia, led by opposition comrades, not merely did nothing to organise, but even to support the strikes of the recent months. The same applies to sixty branches in Saxony.

This surrender to the trade union bureaucracy and the still surviving trade union legalism converts the local opposition branches into a semblance of the reformist organisations. Yet they can, and should become, bulwarks of struggle within the trade unions for the everyday demands of the workers, and against the social-fascist trade union bureaucracy. In the same Bernstadt the local cartel of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions, which is controlled by us, succeeded in organising a fairly successful campaign for a united front in the struggle against fascism and in strengthening its influence over the unorganised workers beyond the local limits. The opposition branches in Geier and Schkeidiz which displayed certain vigour in their work secured good successes. Unfortunately, these are literally the only cases. These opposition locals must be placed under the stronger control of the Party, and revolutionary trade union opposition. It is absolutely necessary to give them daily assistance, to attract the entire membership into systematic work, this requiring primarily the enforcement of trade union democracy in these branches, the focussing of attention upon the problems of the organisation of the struggle of the

\* Local T.U. federations corresponding to trades councils.—Ed.

employed and unemployed workers, a fight against fascism and the reformist bureaucracy. Wherever these branches are led by hopeless opportunists, it will be necessary to mobilise those members who have shown by their vote in favour of the opposition ticket, that they stand for a revolutionary trade union policy against the existing leadership. To secure a real change in the inner trade union work, especially in the case of the forthcoming elections of the local organisations of the reformist trade unions, the activation of the opposition branches is imperative.

That the opposition forces existing in the reformist trade unions have not yet been mobilised, that the change in the trade union work has not yet sufficiently affected the masses is shown by *the extreme tardiness in the organisation of the work of the Communist fractions and opposition groups in the reformist trade unions*. In Breslau, for instance, of thirty-six opposition comrades of a certain local trade union organisation only six attended a meeting which was to discuss the questions of strengthening the work within the union. And this occurred several times. In Stuttgart only thirty-five of several hundred Communists, who are members of the textile workers' union, attended a meeting of the union fraction. In Thalheim only five out of fifty attended a meeting of the Communist fraction. In München-Gladbach the leadership of the Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition was forced to conduct a long discussion with the Communist fraction of the textile workers' union, the biggest local trade union organisation, which believed that it was necessary to advance the slogan of withdrawal from the unions and affiliation with the revolutionary trade union opposition.

The German Communist Party has carried on a big ideological fight against the "leftist" slogan of "destruction of the unions" and the refusal to pay membership dues. But in certain units of the Party and revolutionary trade union movement the harmfulness of these slogans, from the point of view of winning the organised workers, has not yet been appreciated. Thus the central organ of the Red union of building workers *Der Pionier*, No. 15 of this year, in estimating the results of the congress of the Industrial Union of Building Workers (formerly headed by Kaiser), writes :

"The Industrial Union of Building Workers has ceased to be an organisation of class-conscious building workers."

And only very recently in No. 22 of the same organ we read the slogan :

"Not a single man nor a single penny for this union."

Such a slogan, even if issued rarely, is the more dangerous, since the tendency to quit the trade unions

on the part of the Communists and supporters of the opposition, and to under-estimate the work of the trade unions generally, including the opposition organisations, has been fairly strong. At the last Berlin District Conference of the Party, it was revealed that about 250 delegates (nearly a quarter of the total) voluntarily quit the unions. At a district conference of the Party in Elnitz ninety-nine of 176 delegates were neither in trade unions nor the trade union opposition. In Saxony, of 4,000 Party members, only 250 are members of the revolutionary opposition. The very fact of the weak organisation of the Communists in the trade unions and in the trade union opposition is of the greatest importance now. Both to the organisation of an opposition within the trade unions, and securing the successful development of the Red trade unions and the revolutionary opposition a new influx of active members of the Communist Party is necessary. The practical turn of the German Communist Party to work within the reformist trade unions, and the strengthening of their transmission belt—the Red trade unions and the revolutionary trade union opposition—must largely signify the systematic organisation of the Communists in the trade unions and revolutionary trade union opposition.\*

The recent wave of economic struggles in Germany provides the best foundation for a real turn in the work within the trade unions. The organisation and leadership of this strike movement constitutes the biggest success of the German Communist Party and revolutionary opposition during the recent period. According to the figures of the National Committee of the revolutionary trade union opposition, between September 15 and November 1 of this year, there were 773 strikes in Germany. Among the concluded strikes (over 100 strikes continued, when these figures were compiled) 357 ended in victory and seventy-three in failure. Over 500 strikes were led by the revolutionary opposition. The effect of our work among the reformist union membership may be indicated by the fact that those strikes usually ended in victory, which were conducted by the opposition, while most of those defeated were led by the reformists. In this respect the statistics relating to the strike results in Saxony are particularly interesting. During the above period, there were 138 strikes in Saxony (64 by textile workers, 20 by metal workers, 11 by chemical workers, 20 by building workers, etc.). Of these 103 were led by the trade union opposition and twenty-nine by the reformists. The relation between the leadership and the success or failure of the strikes is revealed by the following figures (fourteen strikes were not accounted for) :

\* Without this it will be impossible to secure a speedy change in the union work and in the revolutionary trade union opposition generally.



	Successful Strikes.	Partial Success.	Failure.
Opposition leader- ship ....	86	6	8
Reformist leader- ship ....	18	1	9
Total ....	104	7	17

Thus more than half of the failures took place in the case of those few strikes which were led by reformists.

In this entire strike wave, which affected over 200,000 workers, tens of thousands of members of the reformist trade unions participated, who joined the struggle contrary to the will of their leadership. In practically every one of these strikes there were sharp clashes between the union members, and the reformist union leadership. This, it would seem, should have served as a point of departure for the organisation of an opposition movement within the reformist trade unions, wherever strikes took place. It must be noted, however, that in the overwhelming majority of cases this has not been done. Let us take a few characteristic instances. In the strike at the Geritz factory in Chemnitz, all the 575 workers of the factory participated, including the forty members of the reformist trade union. The strike was led by the opposition. The leadership of the reformist union arranged separate meetings of the organised workers, to break up the strike, and meeting with resistance, continued its fight for the discontinuation of the strike, which it finally succeeded in throttling. The workers were tremendously indignant, and fifty-nine of them joined the opposition. But no opposition group was created within the union. No one took up the task of creating it. In the Hoffman factory of Neigersdorf the opposition conducted a well-organised strike eliminating the trade union bureaucrats, who were forced to flee from a meeting called by themselves. One hundred workers joined the revolutionary opposition. Yet no opposition group was created within the union to conduct further systematic activities. During the strike in a factory in Zernevitz the members of the reformist trade unions actively participated in the struggle and the trade union bureaucracy met with solid opposition when they attempted to recall their members from the strike committee, and the strike ended in partial success. Yet as regards the practical organisation of work within the trade unions it passed practically without leaving a trace. The same applies to the strikes in the Alexander mill of Remscheidt, in the Mannesman factory in Düsseldorf and to hundreds of other strikes. At the same time, in Munich-Gladbach where our comrades, after a strike, took up the organisation of the work within the union, they

succeeded in welding together an opposition group of sixty workers affiliated to the Christian union. In other strikes this was not done.

The workers organised in the reformist trade unions are not drawn into strikes by the revolutionary opposition by means of work within the unions, but by outside measures, and this made itself felt in a number of strikes. In this connection it is necessary to emphasise that the strikes very clearly revealed the tremendous importance of the organised workers to the development of the strike movement in Germany. A very striking instance is provided by the pottery workers' strike in Torgau. In this strike, of 900 workers, eighty were members of the reformist union. When the reformist trade union bureaucracy succeeded at a trade union meeting in persuading these eighty workers to return to work, the remaining 90 per cent. of the strikers began to hesitate, and the strike was broken. With an even smaller percentage of trade union members the trade union bureaucracy succeeded in breaking up certain strikes in Saxony and the Lower Rhine. If the attraction of the reformist trade union members to the strike struggle testifies to the growing radicalisation of these masses, and the deepening breach between the social-fascist leadership and the membership masses, the weak connection between the revolutionary trade union opposition and these masses has enabled the reformist bureaucracy in many places to break up the struggle and to avert strikes in thousands of cases. The greater is the importance of the establishment of connections with the organised masses, the day-to-day work among them for the further development of the economic and political struggle in Germany.

*The developing strike struggle constitutes the main source at present, and reveals the basic methods of providing a new stimulus to the revolutionary work within the reformist trade unions.* The attraction of the organised workers to this or that strike against wage-cuts, dismissals, etc., shows that on these questions, the revolutionary trade union opposition found, in the given factory, a common language with these workers for a united front against the reformist bureaucracy. This shows that, in the given case, the reformist workers were agitated chiefly by the question of wages or dismissals and they found themselves in conflict with their leadership on this question and followed us. But this does not at all end the problem of detaching them from the influence of the social-fascist leadership and getting them to take a final turn in our direction. This joint action must be made into a starting point for joint systematic struggle against capital and the reformist leaders. To achieve this, it is necessary to organise the reformist workers participating in strikes for further opposition work. In many cases this does not at all mean that they must be organised at once in a

revolutionary trade union opposition, in definitely shaped bodies. To begin with it would frequently be sufficient to call them together regularly for the purpose of discussing different problems arising in the factories and trade unions, of agreeing as to action to be taken at the trade union meetings, etc., to establish close contact with them and exercise a steady influence over them. This will be one of the forms of the opposition movement to which Comrade Thälmann referred at the June Plenum of the revolutionary trade union opposition, and which has not yet been developed to this day. The main point is to create within the unions a movement against the T.U. bureaucracy and to lead and consolidate this movement.

This equally applies to the *unemployed actions*. The question of unemployment, of unemployment insurance, coal, bread, shoes for the unemployed is one of those questions which strongly interests the organised workers. Hardly a trade union meeting passes without these questions being raised by the union members. In Germany the first steps towards the revival of the unemployed struggle are being made. Forces for the opposition movement within the trade unions must be drawn from every action on the part of the unemployed.

Every position within the reformist trade unions newly created in connection with a strike or unemployed action helps to capture new positions even where no strikes or unemployed actions took place. The experience of strikes, the concrete examples of their betrayal by the reformists, the strike-breaking activity of the trade union bureaucracy during the Berlin transport workers' strike, the exposure of the machinations of the Leiparts, Eggerts, and Tarnows with the Strassers and Schleichers based upon concrete local trade union problems, can and should all be used to organise an opposition movement within all the reformist unions. And this movement must be placed at the service of the preparation of strikes, of unemployed actions, of the struggle against the reformist trade union bureaucracy, of the fight for the capture of the unorganised masses. For this is the whole meaning and object of the entire trade union work.

Of exceptional importance to the winning of new masses and the stimulation of the work within the unions are the forthcoming elections of the local executive committees and cartels of the All-German Federation of Trade Unions and the factory committee elections. The re-election of more than 13,000 executive committees and tens of thousands of factory representatives affords the German Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition an opportunity to raise the basic questions of their policy before the greatest masses of workers organised in reformist trade unions, to explain that they protect the interests

of the workers, and to expose the treacherous policy and practice of the reformist trade union bureaucracy. As a rule, only a small percentage of the union membership—from 10 to 23 per cent. varying with the different unions—take part in the elections of executives in the reformist trade unions. Here the suppression of inner union democracy is manifested, the systematic policy of the union bureaucracy who stifle the activity of the membership masses. But it is due, in a large measure, also to the weakness of our work in the reformist trade unions, to the fact that we have not converted the election campaign into a great struggle, against the reformist trade union bureaucracy, for the masses and for positions in the reformist unions. It is possible to establish, as a rule, that wherever a really acute struggle was developed in the elections between the revolutionary trade union opposition, and the reformist bureaucracy the participation of the membership in the elections was much higher. And the first thing that must be secured in the forthcoming elections of the local executives is the activation of the masses of organised workers, a general discussion and condemnation of the policy of the reformist trade union bureaucracy, *of the concrete policy and practice of the given executive, of the given union representative on all questions, the protection of the workers' interests in the factories, of the unemployed, etc.* Here there are particular opportunities to establish contact with those members of trade unions who for various reasons—the speech by Leipart, the betrayal of strikes, the reduction of union benefits, the refusal to support the demands of the unemployed, the conduct of the given union officials, etc.—are discontented with the union leadership, and on the basis of a concrete platform of demands, with a view to the local conditions, to organise this discontent, to give it a practical expression at the election meetings and at the elections themselves, to direct it into the channels of our opposition work. Both Leipart's speech, which so strongly agitates the union membership, the proportion between the expenditure on the union apparatus, and on struggle, the reduction of the building workers' wages in the housing co-operatives led by the All-German Federation of Trade Unions—according to the admission of the Year Book of the Labour Federation, the number of workers of the building co-operative of the reformist trade unions, has decreased by 36.5 per cent., while the total sum of wages dropped by 47 per cent., and hundreds of concrete and indisputable local facts of refusal to fight against wage-cuts and dismissals, the sabotage of the workers' united front, the true meaning of the "left" manoeuvres of the trade union bureaucracy, all this must be discussed by the revolutionary trade union opposition at the union meetings. A great field for the attraction of the organised workers to our



side is provided by the question of trade union democracy, the question of proportional elections, of the reports on the work of the executive, of the tricks of the bureaucracy, who call sudden election meetings and invite none but their own followers to them—such meetings have become particularly frequent lately—and particularly the dissolution of opposition executive committees and their replacement by appointed "Commissars." The successful outcome of hundreds of strikes organised and led by the revolutionary trade union opposition affords an excellent opportunity to explain to the trade union members the necessity of the revolutionary trade union opposition, and to dispel that distrust for the Red unions and the revolutionary opposition which the union bureaucracy has succeeded in instilling into certain sections of the reformist workers. To conduct this campaign on the basis of the united front from below in a struggle against all combinations with the leadership, and to make the factories the centre of this campaign, such are the necessary conditions for the correct and extensive organisation of our side of the elections of the local executives of the reformist unions. Here, in the factories, these elections can and must be linked up with the elections of factory committees. Never before has the revolutionary trade union opposition had so many opportunities to fight successfully for the capture of the trade union tickets while putting up its own tickets, and never was this of such importance as it is to-day. The policy of the reformist factory committee should be used by us to expose the policy of the reformist union on those vital questions of the factory and union which are of particular interest to the workers, on the questions of the protection of their everyday needs. Therefore, to secure a broad discussion of the policy of the reformist factory committee at the trade union meeting nominating new candidates, to oppose it by our policy of protection of the everyday needs of the workers, is to seize upon the most important link, the aloofness of the reformist trade union bureaucracy from the masses, and to attract them to the revolutionary camp. This presupposes, on the one hand, a resolute and open exposure of the right opportunist practices of a number of the Red factory committee members, who in many cases, do not differ in their work from the reformists. In the election of the factory committees and local executives it is necessary to show to the masses that we are waging a real fight for the unity of the working-class in an uncompromising struggle against capital, in a struggle against the splitting of its ranks by social-democracy and the trade union bureaucracy. Such must be the aim of both campaigns which are of paramount importance to the German Communist Party and to the revolutionary trade union opposition.

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Closely connected with the work within the trade unions is the question of the *growth of the revolutionary trade union opposition and Red trade unions*. During the past two years about a million members left the reformist trade unions. Yet the revolutionary opposition and the Red unions have not grown during this period, and in a number of cases, have actually decreased in membership. This is one of the central problems of the revolutionary movement in Germany. For the idea of an independent revolutionary trade union movement in Germany consists in the creation of a transmission belt from the Party to the masses capable, on the basis of the organisation of the workers' struggle for their daily demands, of embracing the millions of workers, and, what is specially important, those masses which are leaving the reformist trade union movement, preparing them for decisive battles under the leadership of the Communist Party. Immediately after the creation of the revolutionary trade union opposition and Red unions several hundred thousand workers joined them (in the autumn of 1930 and winter of 1931). This was an expression of the workers' confidence in the policy of the German Communist Party, in its line in the trade union movement, and of distrust for the policy of the Social-Democratic Party and of the reformist labour bureaucracy. This growth was immediately connected with mass strikes of the Berlin metal workers and Ruhr miners, and with the correct tactics used by the Communist Party and revolutionary trade union opposition in these strikes. Since that time the numerical growth of the revolutionary trade union organisations has come to an end.

The main cause of this lies in the fact that from January, 1931 (the strike of the Ruhr miners) until the middle of 1932, owing to a number of *objective*, and especially *subjective*, weaknesses of the newly-created revolutionary trade union organisations, displayed in the struggle of the workers for their everyday needs (the under-estimation of partial strikes, weak use of the united front policy, poor work in the reformist unions, etc.), the strike movement in Germany declined. Apart from its basic function, the organisation of the economic struggle of the workers, the revolutionary trade union movement cannot grow. The main success of the independent revolutionary trade union movement in Germany, since its inception, has been the organisation and leadership of the strike struggles in the latter half of 1932. This created the most important factor for the growth of the Red trade unions and of the revolutionary opposition. It must be said, however, that if the GENERAL results for the past months of 1932 are to be taken, no change in the direction of a growth of the revolutionary trade union organisations is yet to be observed. This may be

seen from the figures on the various districts. During the first nine months of the current year the movement of the membership of the revolutionary trade union opposition in certain districts has been as follows :

	Joined.	Withdrew.
Berlin-Brandenburg ....	5,400	7,200
Lower Rhine ....	5,492	10,800
Lower Saxony ...	1,500	3,000

Altogether, according to the figures of the National Committee of the revolutionary trade union opposition, 34,000 new members joined and 48,000 left the opposition during the past nine months. Does this mean that the revolutionary trade union opposition has not grown during the strikes? The facts show something different. Hundreds of strikes might be cited during which dozens and hundreds of workers joined the opposition (800 men after the strike of the Berlin transport workers, 200 in München-Gladbach in the Hammersen and Pecker factories, 120 in the Meller and Horn factory in Chemnitz, 180 during the transport workers' strike in Hamburg, etc.). An account of these affiliations during September and October in factories which were stopped by strikes shows that up to 20,000 joined the revolutionary opposition. The important thing is that it is factory workers who are joining. In the Ruhr, for instance, 185 employed workers, and 160 unemployed, joined the revolutionary metal workers' opposition, twenty-seven employed and four unemployed the chemical workers' opposition, twenty-five employed and nine unemployed the municipal workers. Among the miners, who did not engage in many strikes at that time, an inverse proportion exists, namely, 276 employed and 417 unemployed. In the Frankfurt district, a year ago, employed workers constituted 20 per cent. of the membership of the revolutionary opposition, against 40 per cent. in September of this year. These are highly important re-groupings. We shall not be mistaken in stating that in the total figures for the first nine months of this year the highest percentage of withdrawals falls to the first half, prior to the rise of the strike wave, while most of the recruitments took place during the last third of the period indicated.

But these figures unmistakably reveal a number of internal difficulties of the revolutionary opposition, leading to failure to keep the masses, who joined it. Here it is necessary, in the first place, to note the *poor ability of the revolutionary trade union organisations to employ special methods, distinct from those used by the political Party—the vanguard of the class—and adapted to the great masses who have not yet grown to an appreciation of all the tasks of the Communist vanguard.* The revolutionary trade union organisation, which places the problems of the organisation of the struggle in the centre of attention, must not forget

that its duty consists in serving its members, in the broadest sense of the word. *Help to each individual member on the question of wage scales, working hours, legal aid not only against the employer but, say, also in relation to the landlord, cultural service, all these "trifles" are of much importance in the special atmosphere of a workers' trade union organisation.* And not only is there nothing wrong in giving attention to this work, in the case of a revolutionary trade union, devoting itself to the real organisation of the workers' struggle, but it is part and parcel of its functions. The language used in the trade union meetings, and in the labour Press, must also be adapted to the masses, and the specific tasks of the trade union organisations. This is not yet the case in the revolutionary trade unions and opposition. If we take the revolutionary trade union Press of Germany, for instance, we will notice at once that it merely literally repeats the language of the Communist Party and its slogans. In this situation it is no wonder that some workers leave the revolutionary trade union opposition and join the Communist Party, while others who have not yet grown to an appreciation of the Communist aims, return to the army of unorganised. Of enormous importance to the elimination of the membership fluctuation is trade union democracy, which insures the attraction of the membership masses to active everyday work. The German Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition have recently been sharply focussing the attention of their organisations on this question. What is now required is a practical turn towards the enforcement of trade union democracy.

In this connection, it is necessary to point out that the revolutionary trade union opposition does not represent a finished form of an independent trade union movement, such as the Red trade unions are. Yet, in Germany, the Red trade unions have become transformed, *in reality, merely* into a part of the revolutionary trade union opposition. Both by its external activities and by its position within the All-German Trade Union Opposition, the Red Union of Metal Workers in Berlin, or the Red Union of Miners does not in any way differ from any district organisation of the revolutionary trade union opposition. This is wrong, and is liable to create the impression that the revolutionary trade union opposition represents a higher form of trade union movement than the Red unions. This is one of the elements affecting the growth of the Red unions.

The weak work within the reformist trade unions constitutes one of the chief causes of the fact that the masses deserting the reformist trade unions, do not join the Red unions or the revolutionary trade union opposition. The reformist trade union bureaucracy has repulsed these masses from the unions controlled



by it, by its treachery, but the revolutionary trade union opposition, whose work in the trade unions is weak, has not succeeded in attracting them.

It must be remembered that in Germany the strike movement has only begun to develop. Thus far, only 200,000 workers have entered it, of the many millions. The work in the reformist trade unions is in an incipient stage. By broadly developing the

economic struggles and bringing about a true change in the work within the trade unions, the German Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition will succeed in undermining the mass influence of the Social-Democratic Party and reformist trade union bureaucracy, the main social bulwark of the bourgeoisie, and creating a truly mass independent revolutionary trade union movement.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

By VALIA.

THE open letter of the Communist Parties of China, Great Britain and Germany to the Indian Communists (see Comm. Int. No. 10, 1932) declared that the Communist movement in India is lagging seriously behind the general development of the working class.

The Indian proletariat is a young proletariat. There are comparatively few workers of the second generation. The greater part of the workers have come in from the villages, and are closely connected with them. They do not possess habits of organisation, and preserve the numerous traditions of the backward villages. Caste relics and unbelievable poverty, the utter rejection and oppression of the masses of the workers, combined with differences of language and religion, and also various other feudal relics in the social system of India—all this together has hindered the rallying, and the growth of the class-consciousness of the proletariat, and assisted the exploiting classes to preserve their leading influence. However, the exceptional weight of imperialist oppression and landlord-usurer servitude has led to the Indian workers being drawn comparatively early into the political struggle, into the liberation movement.

As early as 1908, under the influence of the first big wave of the independence movement, the workers of Bombay organised a political demonstration and protest strike against the arrest of Tilak. Regarding this demonstration of the Bombay proletariat, Lenin wrote:

"In India also the proletariat has already reached the point of a conscious political struggle, and as this is the case, the days of the Anglo-Czarist order in India are numbered."

Thus, at the dawn of the Indian workers' movement, when trade unions and political organisations of the proletariat did not yet exist, the advanced workers of India had *already* shown their will to struggle for the independence of the

country, in practice, displaying a comparatively high level of political consciousness.

The next ten years did not produce any clear examples of the political growth of the proletariat. The events of 1919-22, however, showed that the Indian proletariat had advanced very far. This was proven not only by the unprecedented growth of the strike movement\* in India and the formation of the first trade unions, but also in the active participation of the working masses (and not in Bombay alone) in political demonstrations, meetings, street conflicts and fights with the police. This is described clearly enough by Gandhi, who, even at that time, was the political leader of the Indian bourgeoisie.

In the article "The Worker's Mite" (see "Young India," page 736 for 1921), characterising the political activity of the workers, Gandhi stated:—

"The public have no idea of the rôle played by the workers in the collection of the Tilak Swaraj fund; 21,000 workers of Ahmedabad paid 54,000 rupees, which according to present wages, is one-tenth of a month's pay; 7,000 workers joined as members. In the same way the Bombay workers sent their coppers without being appealed to. These are striking times."

The awakening of the workers did not at all please the Indian bourgeoisie, and from 1921 to 1932 they have tried in every way to disorganise the struggle of the proletariat.

"The political circumstances are also beginning to have their effect on the workers of India. It would be a *most serious* mistake to use strikes of the workers for political purposes. I do not deny that strikes may serve political ends. But they do not fit in with the plan of *non-co-operation*—

\* In 1921, the number of workers who went on strike was 600,351, with 6,984,426 working days lost. In 1922, there were 435,434 strikers, who lost 3,927,727 working days.

tion without violence. It is most dangerous to use strikes of workers for political purposes until the workers are ready to work for the common good." (Ibid. page 737.)

Gandhi well understood the danger of a wide development of the revolutionary movement of the working masses, and together with the bourgeoisie as a whole, sharply opposed the street demonstrations of the Bombay workers during the visit of the Prince of Wales (1919).

"At this time, in another part of the town, the workers were in a state of *criminal insubordination* . . . enormous crowds . . . held up the trams, knocked the hats off all foreigners and pelted the Europeans with stones. Encouraged by their first successes, the crowd began to burn tramcars and automobiles. There were several such crowds of at least 20,000." (Ibid. page 1156.)

These facts and also the estimate of them given by the leader of the Indian bourgeoisie confirm the fact of the political growth of the working class (in which the influence of the October Revolution was greatly felt), and its exceptional activity in the independence movement of 1919-1922.

The events of 1928-30 again showed a further gigantic development of the Indian proletariat. The influence of successful Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R., the Chinese revolution, the deepening crisis of capitalism and the growing rise of the Communist movement, and also the experience of the class struggle in India which demonstrated the position of the various classes—all this together tremendously advanced the growth of class-consciousness and the organisation of the Indian proletariat.

In 1928-30 the workers took an active part in the boycott of the Simon and Wheatley Commissions. The Bombay demonstration of 20,000 workers on February 3, 1928, on the day of arrival of Simon, was the first separate workers' demonstration with its workers' banners and under revolutionary leadership, and marked a new page in the life and development of the Indian proletariat. A wave of strikes, political strikes, demonstrations, swept the country. The working class emerged as the most active mass force in the struggle against imperialism—a struggle which had a revolutionary effect on the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

In 1930 the working masses all over the country took an active part in the independence movement.

Thus the whole history of the workers' movement for the last twenty-four years shows that the proletariat (especially in the last few years) has actively participated in the struggle for the

independence of India. The proletariat have acted decisively against national slavery and for the liberty of the country. The political activity of the working class has taken the line of the anti-imperialist struggle. This arose from the whole of the circumstances in the country. In this should be sought the explanation of the chief causes of the tremendous influence of the bourgeoisie on the workers. The Indian bourgeoisie, using the hatred of the workers for the imperialists (and being themselves in the liberal "opposition" and "fighting" for reforms), came to the workers with the preaching of the common national front, depicting the Congress as an organisation of the whole people and carefully concealing its bourgeois class nature. In this faith in the National Congress and the illusions regarding the general national front is rooted the fact that many workers who come out into the streets with the slogans, "Down with the imperialists! Long live the revolution! Long live the workers' and peasants' government!" simultaneously support the National Congress, considering that it leads the struggle against the imperialists and represents the interests of the whole people.

The sharpening of the class struggle and the growth of the class-consciousness of the proletariat led, at last, in 1930, to the proletarian vanguard breaking with the "left" national reformists, and the formation of the Communist Party (in the form of separate groups). This formation of the Communist movement, which signified the transition of the proletariat to a *conscious* struggle for proletarian hegemony in the national movement, took place under the influence of the international Communist proletariat. It at once made itself felt in a great sharpening of the struggle of the proletarian vanguard against the leadership of the National Congress, and its agents in the working class movement. The bourgeoisie developed a frenzied attack. In the letter of Nehru to the Bombay workers' and peasants' party in spring, 1930, the bourgeoisie demanded that the advanced workers should submit to the leadership of the National Congress. In reply to the determined resistance of the revolutionary workers (see "Workers' Weekly," February, 1930), who were acting for the independence of the proletariat and a revolutionary programme of struggle, the bourgeois National Congress began an attack on the workers' organisations.

Utilising the support of Roy, Kandalkar and Co., the National Congress conducted a "workers' week," split the Girni Kamgar (the revolutionary trade union of the textile workers, "Red Flag,") etc. All the facts show that the



National Congress and its agents carried on their disorganisational work, hiding behind anti-imperialist phraseology, coming forward in "opposition" to British imperialism. When the experience of the class struggle and the treachery of the National Congress to the independence movement (1930-31) showed the reformist, anti-revolutionary nature of the policy of the National Congress, its bourgeois essence, the working masses began to leave it. In this period the anti-imperialist character of the struggle of the working class began to become a factor which more and more hastened the liberation of the proletariat from the influence of the bourgeoisie, and its conversion from an active force of the independence movement into a leading force, the hegemon of the revolutionary people. Therefore a correct policy of Communists in the sphere of the anti-imperialist movement was, and still is, of the utmost importance.

In order to assist the Indian proletariat to become an independent class force, knowing its special interests and capable of leading the working masses, it is necessary to show (not only in words, in agitation, etc., but in the class struggle, in slogans, in correct forms of movement, etc.), that the National Congress is the class organisation of the bourgeoisie, *betraying* the struggle for independence, that in order to liberate the country from national slavery, it is necessary to create a Communist Party, it is necessary to rally the forces of the working class, the peasants, the revolutionary intelligentsia and the city poor, and, isolating the national reformists, to take the path of revolutionary methods of struggle, under the slogans of the Communist Party, following the example of the Soviet Union and China.

And this can only be carried out by taking a most energetic part in the independence movement, marching in the vanguard, attracting the whole of the working masses by our (proletarian) example, strengthening the common front of the proletariat and of all revolutionary democratic elements of the country, and first of all the working peasants.

In 1931 the workers began to leave the National Congress in comparatively large numbers (the strike at Sholapur, the Bombay demonstration on the day of Gandhi's departure, the numerous resolutions against the Round Table Conference, etc.). However, this process of the development of the workers' movement is taking place irregularly. While the advanced strata are leaving the National Congress, the backward sections of the proletariat, and the backward districts who are coming into the revolutionary struggle for the first time, are supporting the campaigns of the National Congress. In Bombay, the National

reformists, even now, succeed in calling meetings of tens of thousands of workers to protest against the sending of commissions to the Round Table Conference.

This is shown still more clearly in the backward districts. The liberal newspaper, "Leader," on January 8th, 1932, states that the workers of the railway workshops of Perambura (Southern India) demanded from the management that they should be allowed to leave work at two o'clock as a mark of respect to the arrested leaders of the Congress. In reply to the refusal of the management, the workers left work themselves and carried on a "quiet" strike, after which the reformist leaders, headed by Gari, held a prayer meeting of the workers in the evening, praying for the liberation of the national leaders of the Congress.

The conclusion to be drawn from all this is that to become the real leader of the working masses and to lead the revolutionary people to the revolution, isolating the national reformists, the Communist Party must carry on a correct policy in the independence movement, which consists not only of energetically fighting for independence, but also of the ability to attract and use all allies, who are ready, even for a short time, even to a certain limit, to fight really against the imperialists, to carry on a revolutionary struggle against them. The C.P.I., by leading the masses and actively participating in the struggle for independence, can make itself into the leader of the Indian revolution, with which the struggle against feudal relics is indissolubly connected, and for the liberation of the peasants.

#### THE TASKS OF THE COMMUNISTS IN THE ORGANISATION AND LEADERSHIP OF THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE.

The revolutionary groups, which came out in defence of Communism and who considered themselves Communists, in reality remained part of the National Congress to the end of 1929. The process of development and the desertion of the National Congress by the revolutionary groups went on at an increased rate in 1928 and 1929. However, the final separation only came in 1930. The revolutionary groups energetically participated in the independence movement, and had great influence, but by their policy, they, in reality, almost amalgamated with the "left" national reformists, and did not appear before the working masses as an independent class force. As the result, there was no Communist Party.

The renegades, Roy and Co., agreeing to the policy of the Comintern in words, in reality hindered the formation of the Communist Party and called on the working class to submit to "left" national reformism. Hence the desperate agita-

tion of Roy for the formation of a national revolutionary (!) party and the replacement of the Communist Party by it. With this was connected his policy of abandoning criticism of "left" national reformism and the conversion of the working class into an appendage of the bourgeoisie. Roy was expelled from the ranks of the Comintern as a traitor, and an enemy of the international and Indian proletariat. Roy sabotaged the carrying out of the basic tasks, which were insistently shown by Comrade Stalin in 1925 :—

"(1) The winning of the best elements of the working class to the side of Communism and the formation of *independent* Communist Parties; (2) the formation of a national revolutionary bloc of workers and peasants and the revolutionary intelligentsia against the bloc of the conciliatory national bourgeoisie and imperialism; (3) the securing of the hegemony of the proletariat in this bloc; (4) a struggle for the liberation of the town and village petty bourgeoisie from under the influence of the conciliatory national bourgeoisie."

Thus the period up to the end of 1929 was noteworthy for the fact (and after the expulsion of Roy, the remains of his ideology were not entirely eliminated), that the revolutionary groups who, in reality, had fused themselves with the "left" national-reformists, did not criticise him, thus hindering the liberation of the proletariat, from the influence of the bourgeoisie, and its conversion into an independent class force.

As we have already mentioned, a change began in 1930. The Communist groups took definite form. A break was made with "left" national-reformism. A severe struggle commenced. However, in carrying out this necessary change, the Communists made serious mistakes. While correctly sharpening the struggle and exposing the class essence and the conciliatory manoeuvres of the "left" national-reformists and advocating an independent workers' movement and the formation of a Communist Party, the Communist groups drifted away from the anti-imperialist movement, mistakenly identifying bourgeois national-reformism and the leadership of the National Congress (including the "lefts") with the sections of the workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals who were following the National Congress in their desire to fight against imperialism, and who could not see on the legal arena any other organisation which was fighting against imperialism.

The Communist groups made a mistake by putting the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie into the same category. The self-isolation of the Communists from the mass anti-imperialist movement, which outwardly was under the leadership

of the National Congress, was *mistaken to the core*. It led to a weakening of the contacts of the Communists with the working masses, and objectively assisted in strengthening the influence of the bourgeoisie among the toiling masses.

The open letter of the Communist Parties of China, Great Britain and Germany to the Indian Communists deals with this mistake in detail.

The correct position of the Communist Party in the sphere of the anti-imperialist movement is a part of the working-class approach of Communists to the political struggle of the working class. The Communists must seize on every democratic movement, participating in and standing at the head of it, must increase the class-consciousness of the workers, organising the ranks of the toiling masses, and leading them to higher and higher revolutionary aims, and to more revolutionary forms of struggle. In India the Communist Party is being formed and constructed for the first time. For the first time the young Communists (even though still in a propagandist form) are beginning to defend the Communist platform in the most difficult conditions and in reality to oppose themselves to the national bourgeoisie ("Workers' Week" in Bombay). But all the more sharply must we bring to light all the weaknesses of the Communist movement, so as to rapidly form a powerful Communist Party, and ensure the victorious development of the Indian anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution.

The platform of action of the C.P. India correctly pointed out that "the rule of British imperialism is the *basis* of the backwardness, the poverty, and the immeasurable sufferings of our people." British imperialism supports the landlord-usurer system of servitude. It has no moral basis and is generally hated by the oppressed and exploited masses of India. And he is not a Communist who cannot understand the most elementary task—to support with all his force, to move forward and fight for independence and the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle of the working masses, which is beginning, in some places, to link up with the agrarian movement. He is not a Communist who forgets in practice that Communists support every democratic movement, that "we are therefore obliged to set forth *to the whole people* and emphasise the general democratic tasks, not concealing our socialist convictions for a moment. He is not a Communist who forgets in practice his duty to be *ahead* of all in raising, sharpening and solving *every* general democratic question . . . We must undertake the task of organising an all-round political struggle under the leadership of *our* Party so as to help this struggle to the extent of our powers, and the Party could do this, and in reality shows



every oppositional strata that it is doing it" (Lenin).

The Indian Communists must realise this elementary truth and eliminate the under-estimation, which exists among them, regarding the anti-imperialist character of the revolutionary struggle. For example, we must not only energetically support student demonstrations, demonstrations of pickets, mass demonstrations of the Congress, etc., but take part in their organisation, and not remain on one side. At the same time we must spread our agitation everywhere, exposing the treacherous and bourgeois character of the national-reformists, fighting against the leadership of the National Congress, expressing *our* Communist attitude to all questions. It is the direct duty of a Communist to energetically organise activity, to fight for the independent leadership of the masses, to isolate the reformists, etc., using every occasion for this, intervening in every current question. True, the Indian Communists are still extremely weak in the labour movement, and must therefore prominently bring forward *the winning and consolidation of their positions in the working class*, but at the present period of the development of the mass anti-imperialist struggle and the rise of the agrarian movement, it is only possible to achieve this by combining this work with participation in the social struggle. We cannot remain on one side refraining from interference in any question, because:

"Anyone who hastens away from such interference, in reality (whatever his intentions) gives way to liberalism (in the given case, to the National Congress—Author), handing over to it the political education of the workers, giving up the hegemony of the political struggle to elements who in the long run are supporters of the present society" (Lenin, Vol. IV., Russian ed.).

The consciousness of the working class cannot be genuinely political Communist consciousness: "if the workers are not trained to respond to every case of arbitrariness and oppression, violence and abuse, whatever class it affects, and should respond precisely from the social-democratic (read Communist—Author) point of view and not from any other. The consciousness of the workers cannot be true class-consciousness if the workers do not learn by concrete facts, particularly burning questions and events, to observe *every one* of the other social classes in *all* manifestations of the mental, moral and political life of these classes, if they do not learn to apply in practice a materialist analysis and a materialist estimate of all sides of the activity and life of *all* classes, strata and groups of the population. Anyone who directs

the attention, observation and consciousness of the working class exclusively or even primarily to it, is not a social-democrat (read Communist—Author), because the consciousness of the working class is indissolubly connected with the fullest clearness not only theoretically, or rather not so much theoretically as by the experience of political life worked out by conceptions of the mutual relations of *all* classes of modern society" (Lenin, Vol. IV.).

The participation of the Indian proletariat in the national revolution, in the struggle for independence, land and the power of the workers and peasants, must be expressed by separating into an *independent* class force, not merging into the petty bourgeoisie of the towns as sometimes happens with some comrades, not suffering from the half-heartedness, instability, irresoluteness of the intermediate classes, and with all the greater enthusiasm fighting for the cause of the people, of the whole of the working people, at the head of the whole people, and *especially* the toiling peasants, for complete independence, for the destruction of landlord-usurer servitude and all the relics of feudalism in the whole social order of India, for the workers' and peasants' Soviet power, in this way *cleansing and preparing the path to the struggle for socialism*.

#### THE ABILITY TO COMBINE LEGAL AND ILLEGAL WORK.

Another side of the actual self-isolation of the Communists from the mass independence movement has been the inability to combine legal and illegal forms of work. The necessity of forming an *illegal* Communist Party is recognised, although it is not always carried out. In a number of districts, one of the most serious problems is still the difficulty of passing from legal to illegal forms of work and organisation (while preserving and developing legal forms of mass work), the difficulty of guarding the cadres of the Party from police destruction and provocation.

However, the construction of an illegal Communist Party and the development of illegal and semi-legal forms of work not only does not reduce, but, on the contrary, still more emphatically stresses the *necessity* for the simultaneous development of the legal and illegal forms of mass organisation. The incapable utilisation of legal possibilities by the Indian Communists in 1930 and 1931 objectively assisted the bourgeoisie to support and spread reformist illusions among the workers, to support the idea among the backward circles of the proletariat that the National Congress is carrying on a struggle for freedom and defending the interests of the masses of the people. On the question of the struggle in the streets and the utilisation of legal possibilities, the III. Congress

of the Russian Bolshevik Party in 1905 adopted a resolution which, with certain "amendments" for Indian circumstances, is very useful for the Communists of India to study. In this resolution, it says:—

"In view of the fact that (1) the revolutionary movement in Russia has somewhat shaken and disorganised the monarchy, which has been forced to allow freedom of political activity to a considerable extent to the classes hostile to it; (2) that this freedom of political action is used by the bourgeois classes, thus still further strengthening their political superiority over the working class and increasing the danger of converting the proletariat into a simple appendage of bourgeois democracy; (3) that among the working masses the striving towards independent open action on the political arena is widening more and more, although without any participation of social democracy (now Communists), the III. Congress calls the attention of all Party organisations to the fact that it is necessary:

- (a) to utilise all and every case of the open political activity of society and the people in the press, in the unions and at meetings, to put forward the independent class demands of the proletariat in opposition to general democratic demands, for the development of its class-consciousness, for the organisation

of it in the course of such action into an independent socialist (nowadays Communist) force.

- (b) To utilise all legal and semi-legal methods for the formation of workers' societies and organisations, in which case it is necessary to strive to assure a prevalence of social democratic (read Communist — Author) influence in such societies, to the conversion of them into base points of the Communist Party" (Lenin, Vol. XVII. Draft Resolution).

The bourgeoisie attempt to direct the growing awakening of the workers, the strivings towards organisation, etc., along channels of reformism, and to convert the proletariat into a "simple appendage" of the bourgeoisie. The correct utilisation of legal and illegal forms of work and organisation pre-supposes the most energetic construction and development of the illegal Communist organisation, the formation of cells in the factories and Communist fractions in the mass organisations to be carried on *simultaneously*. This is one of the main prerequisites so that Communist leadership will be guaranteed, and the hegemony of the proletariat be established in the movement of the whole people.

(To be continued.)

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usual practice at the present time when members of the Party committees go out to the localities only to deliver long speeches, without entering into a study of the life and activity of the given local organisation, and not checking up on its work on the spot and giving instructions with regard to the best carrying out of the directives of the higher Party organs, including the directives of the Comintern. Besides this verification and instruction from above, there should be regular meetings and conferences of the Party activists and Party conferences for collective verification of the work which is being carried out, with the aim of bringing shortcomings and mistakes to light, and taking measures to eliminate them on the spot, in the course of the work.

*In all these forms of verification, in every concrete case, the question must be concretely raised as to the responsibility of every Party worker and particularly of every member of the Party leadership.* Up to the present, this responsibility is frequently not applied at all in the Communist Parties of capitalist countries. If it is operated, then it is at the time of intense struggle against oppositions and deviations. But we must keep in view that the struggle against deviations should be carried on all the time, that it would be foolish to wait for the accumulation of a considerable

number of various deviations and the formation of an opposition to commence a struggle against them. Then, in addition to deviators there may be (and are) in the organs of Party leadership simply incapable workers. At the same time there are growing (and many have already grown) hundreds and thousands of new activists which the whole Party should discover in the course of strikes, demonstrations, and other mass revolutionary actions, checking up on them at meetings of activists and Party conferences and drawing them into leading work, thus extending the circle of the Party and near-Party activists and assuring the possibility of a rapid replacement of useless leading workers who have disclosed their inability to carry out in practice the line of the Comintern and the directives of the leading organs of their Party.

It is impossible to create the iron discipline necessary in the Communist Parties without systematically checking up on the fulfilment of decisions and without a correct policy of cadres, without a systematic selection of the best popular leaders of the working class into the leading Party organs, workers who understand how to independently carry out the line of the Party and the Comintern suitably to the concrete conditions of the place and time. From this point of view

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# PARTY DISCIPLINE IN THE LIGHT OF THE DECISIONS OF THE XII. PLENUM OF THE E.C.C.I

By O. BEVER.

VERY little attention has been paid recently to the question of Party discipline in the documents of the Communist Parties and in the Party press. This is a serious omission. In Party circles there is a widely-spread opinion that discipline is something which comes of itself, that there is nothing to explain, that every Party member knows that he has to carry out the Party directives. This idea is deeply mistaken. In reality Party discipline is very unsatisfactorily arranged in the Parties of capitalist and colonial countries with very few exceptions, and this unsatisfactory Party discipline is the direct result of the fact that the Party committees do not take up the systematic explanation of the principles of Bolshevik Party discipline among the members and do not carry on a stubborn struggle for the establishment of Bolshevik discipline in the everyday practice of Party work.

The Second Congress of the Comintern gave the following directives on the question of Party discipline in the Twenty-One Conditions of acceptance into the Communist International:—

"12. All the Parties belonging to the C.I. should be formed on the basis of democratic centralism. At the present time of acute civil war, the Communist Party will only be able fully to do its duty when it is organised in a sufficiently thorough way, when it possesses an iron discipline bordering on military discipline, and when its Party centre, who are to endow this centre with complete power, authority and ample rights, enjoys the confidence of the members of the Party."

The Comintern had to put forward this demand because the European Social Democratic Parties, from the left wings of which the Communist Parties in capitalist countries were formed, had no firm discipline. The Social Democratic Parties were chiefly adapted to the parliamentary struggle, and had no need of iron discipline in their ranks. From the very first days of its existence, the Comintern was compelled to declare a merciless struggle against these social democratic traditions. The situation of the relative stabilisation of capitalism assisted a renewal of Right opportunist, social democratic traditions in the ranks of the European and American Communist Parties. In these circumstances of the end of the revolutionary wave and the weakening of the mass revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, discipline became definitely weaker in all European and American Communist Parties.

The XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. established the fact that "the international situation sharply raises the question of the fulfilment of the task which is fundamental at the present time—the preparation of the working class and the exploited masses in the course of the economic and political struggle for the impending fights for power, for the dictatorship of the proletariat." These changing international circumstances evidently require from all Communist Parties, and above all from the Communist Parties which are acting on sectors where a revolutionary situation exists (China, Spain) and in which a revolutionary crisis is rapidly maturing (Poland, Germany, Japan), should rapidly and definitely strengthen their Party discipline and require the establishment of iron discipline "bordering on military discipline" in the ranks of the Communist Parties as an absolutely compulsory organisational prerequisite for the preparation for decisive revolutionary fights and the final triumph of the working class in each country and on an international scale.

The concrete question of Party discipline at the present juncture stands as follows:—

At the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. it was continually stressed in the speeches of all the delegates that one of the chief causes why the Communist Parties were lagging behind the growth of the revolutionary activity of the masses was the neglect of the organising rôle of the Communist Parties in the revolutionary mass movement. But a necessary condition for carrying out the leading rôle of the Communist Parties is the strengthening of iron discipline in them and simultaneously the increasing of the revolutionary initiative in the localities. But in both respects, there are great shortcomings in the Communist Parties.

What does such a situation show?

It shows two things:

(1) Among the masses of the Party members, including among them the leading Party activists, there is not yet the necessary clear understanding that the victorious liberating struggle of the working class is impossible without a strong centralised leadership and that a necessary prerequisite for carrying out the centralised leadership is the ability of the Party organisations to carry out rapidly and consistently the directives of the Party committees above them.

(2) On the part of the organs of Party leadership, on the part of the Party committees, there



is no correct arrangement of systematic verification, instructions and a stubborn struggle in the matter of carrying out of the directives of these Party committees and other higher organs of Party leadership by the lower Party organisations. These two points, however, require in turn to be concretised.

The liberating struggle of the proletariat inevitably bears an international character. One of the chief causes why the C.P.S.U. was and is able to build Socialism in one country is the assistance given to the toilers of the U.S.S.R. by the workers and peasants of other capitalist and colonial countries. The Comintern is the international Party of the proletariat. It leads the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants of all countries, giving instructions on the forms and methods of the revolutionary struggle of the toilers in every country on the basis of a study of the international situation.

Therefore, an important component part of the iron discipline of the Communist Parties is their readiness to carry into practice the political line and the various concrete directives of the Communist International. This international discipline of the Communist Parties obtains particular importance at the present juncture, in the present circumstances of the end of capitalist stabilisation, when the ruling classes are using innumerable provocations to impel the working class to undertake a premature advance, and when, on the other hand, international actions of solidarity are particularly important without a single hour of delay, and finally when the question will rise with increasing intensity before the Communist Parties as to their readiness to support some particular form of the revolutionary struggle of the working masses of another country or countries. The great strike of the English miners in 1926 was broken partly because it was not supported by the workers of other countries. The strike of the Belgian miners in 1932 did not meet an international response. The international campaign of struggle in defence of the Chinese revolution is unsatisfactory at present. A particularly great responsibility lies at present on all Communist Parties in the matter of making real preparations for civil war in case the ruling classes should begin imperialist war or intervention against the U.S.S.R. The Communist Parties can only successfully pass the test of civil war if they have iron discipline in their ranks.

The readiness of the Communist Parties of capitalist countries to carry out the directives of the Comintern is of tremendous importance from another point of view. In the Executive Committee of the Comintern are concentrated the best

forces of the international workers' movement, the whole experience of the Marx-Leninist leadership of the revolutionary class struggle. The whole historic path travelled by the Communist International shows the extent to which the Communist Parties of all countries need the aid of the leading organs of the Comintern, both when solving their own internal national questions, and above all in the struggle against social democratic and anarcho-syndicalist traditions, which are still extremely tenacious of life in the Communist Parties of capitalist countries, traditions which drag the Communist Parties into the morass of open Right and "left" opportunist waverings and vacillations. It is sufficient to remember the rôle of the E.C.C.I. in the struggle against the Right opportunist Brandlerite leaders of the C.P. of Germany and later in the matter of liberating the C.P.G. from ultra-"left" "leaders," Ruth Fischer and Maslov, to realise clearly the whole significance of strict international discipline by the Communist Parties for the rapid and genuine bolshevisation of their ranks, and consequently also in the matter of their general preparations for the decisive struggles for power.

At present the Comintern sets before its sections as most important tasks which ensure the winning over of the majority of the working class and the preparation for decisive struggles, to strengthen the influence of the Party in the big factories, in all mass proletarian organisations, especially in the trade unions and the organisations of the unemployed, by the capable application of the tactic of the united front from below, combining legal methods of Party work with semi-legal and strictly illegal methods; to destroy the mass influence of social fascism and prepare the broad masses of the employed and unemployed proletarians for the higher forms of class struggle, on the basis of the struggle for their immediate demands. Thus in the near future a measuring rod of the good discipline of the Communist Parties will be the successful fulfilment of these demands which are put forward by the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

With this aim, the E.C.C.I. and also the leading organs of every section (above all the C.C.) must ensure that all the Party organisations in all countries and every Party member is fully acquainted with all the chief directives of the Comintern, especially if there are directives of the C.I. with regard to the given country and the given Party organisation. The masses of Party members can be made aware of the decisions and the directives of the Comintern in various ways. Among these methods should be specially emphasised the discussion of the decisions and the



directives of the Comintern at general meetings of Party members, including meetings of factory and street cells. The checking up of the fulfilment of the decisions and directives of the Comintern must be organised in all Party organs, right to the lowest cell. No instructor or representative is in a position to make an all-round deep and practical verification himself as to the fulfilment of the directives of the Comintern without mass self-criticism from below. Therefore, the question of mass self-criticism from below now takes on the character of one of the chief political and organisational problems in the preparation of the working class for decisive victorious fights.

In our Parties, self-criticism from below up to now has been very poorly developed (and in some cases is altogether absent). Recently self-criticism from above has been widely spread (France). But, firstly, self-criticism should not take the form of self-castigation, and secondly, self-criticism from above, the self-criticism of Party leaders (central and local) must compulsorily be supplemented by self-criticism from below. Self-criticism from below is an important basis of the régime of centralised iron discipline in the ranks of the Communist Parties.

Self-criticism from below is an absolutely specific form for forging out iron Party discipline. It is only possible in the ranks of Bolshevik Communist Parties, because the Communist Parties carry out the rôle of the vanguard of the proletariat by the most consistent and capable defence of the interests of the working class as a whole. Comrade Lenin systematically emphasised that the Communist Parties, as the vanguard of the working class, must at the same time learn from the masses, and must with particular attention study the methods and organised forms of the class struggle which are created by the revolutionary initiative of the masses. Lenin himself was an incomparable master of the use of the experience of the revolutionary creative powers of the masses. It is sufficient to remember his teachings on the Soviet Government as a historic form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, teachings which were taken from the practice of the revolutionary initiative of the Russian proletariat.

There is nothing more harmful than a mechanical sergeant-major conception of centralisation and Party discipline. In the Communist Parties, the extensive powers of a powerful and authoritative leading centre must *compulsorily* go hand-in-hand with the bold initiative of the local Party committees, especially the factory cell. *The local Party committees and cells must utilise every favourable moment to strengthen the influence of the Party organisationally and politically in the localities, even though they have not*

*yet received directives on these questions from higher Party centres.* Knowing the general position of the Party and the Comintern, knowing the line of the Party and the Comintern on the chief questions of Party work, the local Party committees and cells must on their own initiative introduce changes into the existing forms and methods of Party work on every occasion when changing circumstances demand it, without waiting for special directives from the centre.

This boldness and independence of the local Party organisations in carrying out the general line of the Party and its C.C. according to the concrete local conditions formed the main strength of the underground Bolshevik Party, when the local Party organisations, in view of police repression, were frequently cut off from their leading centres for long periods and had to act without losing a minute. This boldness and decisiveness of the local organisations of the Russian Bolsheviks lead to the victory of the October Revolution. The local organisations and every Party member, knowing the general directives of the C.C. on the seizure of power, did not wait for special directives for themselves, but acted with the greatest unselfishness according to local conditions. On the contrary, in West European Communist Parties, the local Party organisations and especially the factory cells, were until recently anæmic and passive as a rule and did not take the risk of acting without directives from the C.C. Such was the case, for example, in Berlin on July 20, 1932. The Berlin Party Committee was late with its call for a demonstration after the appeal for a general strike, and the cells in turn did not show the slightest initiative. As the result, the call for a general strike hung in the air.

Therefore, the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I., while demanding from all Communist Parties an increase in the responsibility of every Party member and every Party organisation, simultaneously declared in the most decided form against super-centralism and for the initiative and independence of local Party organisations, especially the Party cells.

The correct line of the local Party organisations and cells is attained by a good selection and by the systematic Marxist-Leninist training of the leading cadres from top to bottom. Lenin from the first steps of his work for the organisation of the Bolshevik Party systematically and with the greatest insistence raised the question of the Party committees compulsorily, including the best and most popular leaders of the workers who were in contact with the masses. In view of the fact that under the difficult police conditions of tsarism, "for better ensuring the correct and continuous functioning of the local organisations, it



is permissible to make partial use of the principle of co-optation," Comrade Lenin definitely insisted that the "co-optive members should be replaced at the first opportunity by comrades properly elected on the basis of the rules."

(See Org. Resolution of the Conference of the R.S.L.P. (b) December 19, 1908).

Why did Lenin insist on these demands to the Party leaders? Because the popular workers' leaders in close contact with the masses well reflect the feelings of the masses and can best of all bring into practical existence the correct fighting slogans of the general line of the Party. In addition, Party committees composed of popular leaders of the workers, in view of the deep faith of the masses in them, can most easily convert these fighting slogans into fighting mass revolutionary actions, i.e., they can carry out the general line of the Party in practice. Until recently, in our Communist Parties, when Party committees are being formed, the question of putting on to them the Party members who are leaders of the workers and are most popular and best connected with the masses has not been raised with sufficient consistency. On the contrary, in view of the absence of self-criticism from below, when forming Party committees, there have been not infrequent cases of acting haphazardly, working on considerations of groups, etc. At the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. the delegates of the C.P.s of France, Great Britain and the U.S.A. spoke very eloquently of this, the delegates of the C.P. of Germany gave various facts, etc. Therefore, all Communist Parties should now attentively examine how matters stand with them regarding the composition of the Party committees, and whether they contain the popular Party members who are leaders of the working class and connected with the masses.

On the basis of the materials which we possess, we can definitely assert that in all countries there are many popular revolutionary workers' leaders who are authoritative among the masses, who, however, not only do not sit in the organs of the Party leadership, but are even unknown to the latter. For this very cause, we find the cases of which the delegates at the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. spoke—big strikes break out in the factories where the given Party committees did not expect any strike movement, or there are cases of big strike movements extending over whole districts (the Lancashire textile strike) led by workers unknown to the Party leaders.

The Party committees must make provisions so that in the course of class fights non-Party workers will be brought forward to the rôle of popular Party leaders and also the workers of social democratic organisations and members of

reformist trade unions. While exposing the social fascist hangers-on and plain police spies and strikebreakers, the Communist Parties must at the same time use every effort to bring within the orbit of their influence all honest non-Party worker leaders and leaders promoted by the masses from among the revolutionary-minded social democrats and members of reformist trade unions, making the widest use along these lines of all kinds of mass organisations—trade unions, co-operative societies, sport clubs, etc., and especially the revolutionary elected organs of workers' representatives, such as factory committees, workers' delegations, strike committees, etc.

The question of Party discipline must compulsorily be connected with penalties for failure to comply with the demands of Party discipline. The Party rules provide for various penalties—reprimand, warning, expulsion from the Party. In Party practice, all these measures of Party disciplinary influence are used, but it should be mentioned that they are frequently used mechanically and not in connection with the work for the Bolshevik steeling of the Party ranks, for which reason these measures frequently miss their aim. At the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. much was said about the mechanical expulsion of opportunist deputies by the C.C. C.P.F., without explaining this measure to the masses of Party members and the working class, as the result of which some of these deputies again secured election to parliament and preserved, or sometimes even enlarged, their contact with the masses (through the municipalities).

It should be emphasised that the question of any kind of penalty for the violation of Party discipline must be taken along the lines of fulfilling the basic political and organisational directives of the higher Party organs, in which case *the main attention must be paid to verification and correction in the course of the work.* This requires every Party committee to watch attentively what is being done in Party organisations led by them, how the chief directives are carried out at every sector, so as to come immediately to the assistance in every case when these directives are carried out badly or altogether not applied, taking the necessary measures immediately to change the state of affairs which has arisen. This requires the establishment of personal contact between the Party leaders and the Party organisations under their guidance (especially with the cells), the decisive elimination of leadership through circulars which is widely practised at present, including the C.P. of Germany. This requires also the abolition of the

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